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UAE minister invited to Iran

ABU DHABI (R) — Iran Sunday invited United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hamdan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan to visit Tehran. The UAE and Iran are locked in a territorial dispute over three strategic islands. They agreed to resolve the problem at talks in Abu Dhabi in September but the issue was raised again during Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati's tour last month of Gulf Arab states. The Iranian ambassador in Abu Dhabi handed Sheikh Hamdan an invitation from Mr. Velayati to visit Tehran, the official emirates news agency, WAM, said. It did not say when he would go.

6 killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AP) — Security forces killed six militants in incidents around the capital, military sources said Sunday, and officials intensifying their crackdown put in effect an extensive curfew into effect. In Kabylie, about 100 kilometres west of Algiers, authorities launched a search Saturday after members of the armed Islamic movement attacked a local government building in Tizi. Overnight Saturday, security forces killed five Muslim extremists in Leveille, a southern suburb of Algiers known for extremist activity. A sixth was killed near Morelli, on the western edge of the capital, said the military sources.

Mongolians vote

BEIJING (AP) — Mongolians voted Sunday in their first multi-party presidential elections ever, choosing between a conservative newspaper editor and an incumbent who was dumped by the ruling former communists. Recent opinion polls showed President Punsalmaagyn Ochirbat favoured over Lodogyn Tudev, editor of the official newspaper Uuen. Mr. Ochirbat, 50, a career politician in the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, is running now as the joint candidate of two opposition parties, the National Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party.

Indian troops kill 2 'infiltrators'

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian troops shot and killed three guerrillas trying to cross from Pakistan into the disputed state of Kashmir, Press Trust of India reported. Pakistani soldiers fired Saturday at Indian troops returned fire, killing three infiltrators and wounding several others, Press Trust reported. Defence Ministry spokesmen were not immediately available to comment.

U.S. changes submarine operations for safety

KIEV (R) — The United States has made a dramatic change in its navy submarine operations to avoid a recurrence of two recent collisions with Russian subs in Arctic waters. U.S. Defence Secretary Les Aspin said Sunday. "We have a dramatic, fundamental change," Mr. Aspin told reporters flying with him from Germany on a visit to the former Soviet republic of Ukraine. Mr. Aspin refused to give details of the changes, but said he had informed Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev of the move during talks in Garmisch, Germany, which ended early Sunday. Mr. Aspin said the change went into effect last week after it was submitted to the White House and approved by President Bill Clinton.

Mandela calls for national meeting

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Nelson Mandela called Sunday for leading political groups to hold a peace meeting aimed at ending chronic violence. Black and white negotiators last week set April 27 as a tentative date for the nation's first elections including the black majority, but some groups oppose planning elections until the violence diminishes. Mr. Mandela said groups that signed a national peace accord in 1991 — including the government. His African National Congress and the rival Inkatha Freedom Party — should meet urgently to address the problem in union.

Arabs seek increased involvement of U.S. and Russia in peace process

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Foreign ministers of the Arab parties to the Middle East peace process and Egypt said Sunday they would seek more U.S. and Russian involvement in the negotiations to ensure progress in the stalled talks but fell short of directly announcing their agreement to attend the 10th round of negotiations, scheduled to begin in Washington on June 15.

"Out of their serious commitment to the peace process and... (to reach) a just and comprehensive peace that will put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of complete withdrawal from the occupied territories, and in reference to the invitation by the co-sponsors of the conference to all parties to participate in the 10th round, the ministers have agreed to intensify contacts with the co-sponsors of the peace process during the time remaining before the appointed date of the beginning of that round... to ensure their serious intervention to achieve substantial progress in the negotiations," they said in a joint statement issued at the end of a seven-hour meeting here.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Al Hassan, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Shar-

aa, Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mousa and foreign affairs chief of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Farouk Kaddoumi also called on the United States and the international community to oblige Israel to work towards ensuring the success of the negotiations by ending the six-week-old closure of the occupied West Bank and Gaza, respect human rights in the occupied territories, implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 and ceasing hostilities in Lebanon.

"The ministers have agreed to urge the United States to play the role of full partner and to modify that role in an effective and objective manner that will guarantee an honest commitment to the principles of the peace process, especially the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 423," said the communiqué, which was read out by Mr. Al Hassan around midnight.

Blaming Israel for the failure of the previous round of talks to make progress, the ministers condemned what they called Israeli violations of international law and the terms of reference of the peace process and warned that these practices could jeopardise the negotiations. The ministers, who will hold their next coordination meeting in Lebanon, reiterated their commitment to reaching a just and comprehensive peace with Israel on the basis of

relevant Security Council resolutions and peace in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967.

While the final communiqué did not include a direct Arab announcement that the Arabs would attend the 10th round of talks, officials said earlier that such a decision was a foregone conclusion.

Delegates said the decision was implicit in the communiqué. Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali said earlier that Jordan and Israel were nearing an agreement on a draft agenda for their negotiations that was initially reached in the seventh round of talks last year.

"We have almost already finalised and finished with our agenda with its substance. Still we have minor problems with the language (but these) will be cleared soon," Dr. Majali told journalists after welcoming the ministers to the meeting as men of peace, seeking a just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was Sunday quoted as claiming that Israel and Jordan had reached a peace agreement "and all it needs is to be signed."

The Associated Press also said Mr. Peres indicated during a speech at Haifa University that the closure of the occupied territories will remain until an agreement on self-interim period with the Palestinians was reached.

The Muslim Brotherhood, the largest bloc in Jordan's Parliament, meanwhile called on the Arab conferees to withdraw from the peace

process and vowed to "resist it with all possible ways and means."

The Brotherhood criticised Dr. Majali for saying that Jordan had made progress in finalising an agenda for negotiations with Israel.

It said the agenda ignored core issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

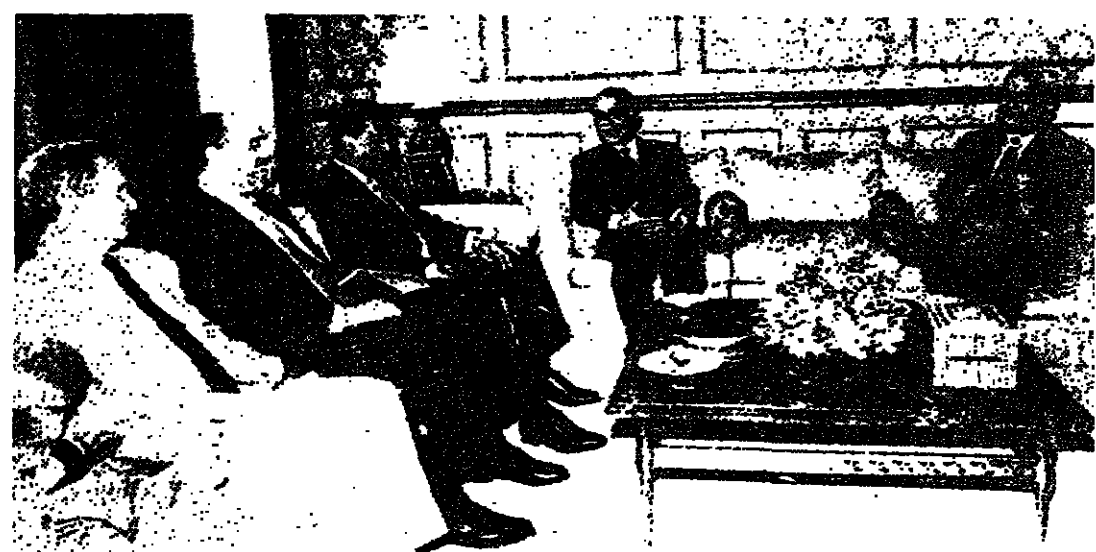
Mr. Hassan, also a member of the Jordanian press, told the Associated Press Jordan had "deliberately slowed down the process of negotiations with Israel in the ninth round because we saw the Palestinians lagging behind."

The Arabs have an understanding that no separate peace agreements will be reached with Israel before the Palestinians thrash out a settlement on the future of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A senior PLO official, speaking after the first session Sunday, said the Palestinians asked the conferees to consider pressing for high-level meeting of the Arabs involved in the peace talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to pin down the Americans on key issues. He did not elaborate.

But Suleiman Najib, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, said earlier Sunday that the Palestinians want the Americans to pledge that the talks will lead to Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

Arafat urges greater U.N. role; "Gaza first" is Israeli focus; Hussein to consult Arafat before Washington trip, page 10



His Majesty King Hussein Sunday meets with the foreign ministers of Egypt and the Arab parties involved in peace talks with Israel in a meeting attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. From left to right are: Farouk Al Sharaa of Syria, Fares Bouez of Lebanon and Amr Mousa of Egypt (Petra photo)

King says strength, fairness of Arab cause gain more support

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday stressed the strength and fairness of the Arab cause and said it was attracting increasing support.

In a meeting with the foreign ministers of the Arab countries involved in the Middle East peace process, King Hussein said the "current critical situation through which the Arab Nation is passing requires a high degree of responsibility."

King Hussein voiced satisfaction with the inter-Arab coordination in the peace process

saying that it "constitutes the nucleus to resume dialogue and develop genuine cooperation among Arab countries on firm and solid grounds."

King Hussein emphasised the need for a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the region based on international legitimacy, and called on the foreign ministers to push the peace process forward with a view to guaranteeing the national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The King referred to the daily suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and expressed Jordan's resolve to defend human rights, freedom and dignity.

The meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki.

The King also hosted a lunch in honour of the visiting ministers, heads of the Arab delegations to the peace talks and the ambassadors of the countries involved in the peace process.

Israel: Hamas did not kill abducted soldier

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel arrested four Palestinians for the killing of a soldier last December that ostensibly led to its mass expulsion of Palestinians to Lebanon. But said Sunday they had not acted for the Muslim group Hamas.

A senior official of the General Security Services, Israel's secret police, said the men — all in their 20s and residents of Arab East Jerusalem — had become linked to the Qassam military wing of Hamas only after they killed border policeman Nissim Toledo.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, reacting to growing popular anger at a series of attacks on Israeli forces culminating in them Toledo killing, ordered an unprecedented expulsion of Palestinians to Lebanon on Dec. 17.

The killing of 415 Palestinians — described by Mr. Rabin as Hamas activists — drew international condemnation and froze Middle East peace talks from December until April 27. They are still stranded in Lebanon.

The official, giving a rare briefing to foreign journalists on condition of anonymity, said the four

men had carried out the Dec. 12 attack on the spur of the moment, kidnapping Toledo after stunning him by driving into him.

They signed their demand for Israel to release Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmad Yassin with the name Qassam and killed Toledo the same night after their deadline passed.

"The decision was their own," said the official, who reported all four men had confessed. "They were not a part and did not have a connection as far as we know with Hamas (Qassam wing)."

The leader was identified as Mohammad Isa, 25, a journalist for Sawt Al Haq, the newspaper of the Islamic movement promoting Muslim fundamentalism among Israeli Arabs.

The security official said the four men contacted a Palestinian with links to Qassam after killing Toledo to get weapons and money to buy a car for further attacks. They had no arms until taking Toledo's handgun.

In subsequent months, the four men subsequently staged a series of attacks, killing two policemen sleeping in their car in March. All three killings were inside Israel.

"We have known for a while that there is a cell which is targeting policemen and we did a lot openly and secretly to catch that cell," police chief Rafi Peled told Israel Radio.

The four lived in neighbourhoods viewed by Israel as part of annexed Arab East Jerusalem.

"A cell from Jerusalem has an operational advantage because they have Israeli cars with Israeli licence plates and with Israeli identity cards. Their freedom of movement is greater," Mr. Peled said, adding that they did not arouse suspicion.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal and other officials heralded the arrest announced Saturday of 124 Palestinians as a blow to Hamas and justification for the closure of the occupied territories, now in its third month.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Shahal said dozens more arrests were expected. He said some of the cells took orders from the expellees in South Lebanon.

Israel says the nine-week closure of the occupied territories is reducing attacks and making it easier to uncover resistance cells. Palestinians complain it is collective punishment on the residents of the occupied territories and has cut thousands of Arab workers off from jobs in Israel.

Among the arrested was Zair Jabarin, 28, from Nablus who was accused of arranging funding for 15 cells uncovered in the West Bank, the source said. Jabarin's interrogation led to the capture of many of the activists, he said.

The security source said of the members of the various cells had no formal training.

"They were amateurs, but amateurs can make a lot of harm," he said. "These are people who are probably very fanatical. They were sure about their goals. They didn't do it for money."

Some of the funding for the cells for purchasing cars and weapons came from Islamic activists in the United States, the source said.

Israel has arrested at least three Arab Americans and accused them of bringing funds to Hamas. But none has yet been put on trial, and Israel has offered little evidence for its repeated claims that the Hamas movement was run from abroad.

Flare-up in violence hits relief efforts in Somalia

22 Pakistanis, 23 Somalis killed; Islamabad blames Aideed, demands punishment

Combined agency despatches

MOGADISHU — The United Nations and foreign aid agencies began evacuating workers Sunday after battles between Somalis and U.N. peacekeepers killed at least 22 Pakistani troops and as many as 23 Somalis.

The fighting crippled humanitarian efforts. Dozens of non-essential U.N. personnel were told to pack their bags and were waiting at Mogadishu's airport for a cargo plane that was to take them to Nairobi.

Several members of the Irish aid agency Concern were also leaving, and the international agency Care moved six workers out of the city. Both agencies planned to operate with two people in Mogadishu until tension created by Saturday's eruption of violence subsided.

Pakistan demanded that the United Nations punish the Somali gunmen.

Dozens of U.S. and Italian helicopters patrolled over Mogadishu Sunday. Few people were on the streets.

A night of widespread shooting followed Saturday's battle, in which well over 100 were wounded, including three American servicemen.

Some U.N. officials spent Saturday night in their offices, trapped by fighting in the streets. Foreign aid workers said fresh attacks on U.N. forces were feared.

The Pakistani casualties, including at least 50 wounded, were among the heaviest ever suffered in the history of United Nations peacekeeping missions.

Italian troops had to send a column of tanks and armoured cars with helicopter cover Saturday to rescue 80 trapped Pakistanis and 10 Americans from a disused cigarette factory.

Five Pakistani soldiers are still missing, the U.N. said, they are widely assumed to have been captured by Gen. Aideed's men.

Gen. Aideed's followers say, but the U.N. and the Pakistani government deny, that the flash-

U.N. calls for warlord's arrest

THE U.N. Security Council Sunday unanimously called for the arrest, prosecution and trial of those who killed U.N. peacekeepers in a new burst of weekend violence in Somalia.

Somali warlord General Mohammad Farah Aideed was not mentioned by name in the council's resolution but the United Nations has accused him of instigating the shootings. The vote was 15-0.

point was a U.N. attempt to take an Aideed-controlled radio station in southern Mogadishu.

The United Nations operations in Somali's (UNOSOM), which took control of peacekeeping in Somalia from the United States on May 4, has described the attackers only as "unidentified gunmen."

(Continued on page 10)

Fighting challenges U.N. mission, page 2

Socialist win seen in Spain

MADRID (AP) — Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez's ruling Socialists appeared to be heading to a narrow victory in general elections Sunday, apparently overcoming concern about Spain's dismal economic performance and allegations of party corruption, according to initial exit polls.

The victory could signal a rejection of the centre-right popular party, which for some Spaniards harks back to the days of long-time dictator Francisco Franco.

The Socialists, who appeared to be on their way to their fourth victory since coming to power in 1982, will garner some 37.74 per cent of the vote, 5.64 percentage points more than the Popular Party, according to a poll carried out for Spanish national radio and television.

The results would give the Socialists between 139 and 155 seats in the 350-seat lower house of parliament, which most likely would force Mr. Gonzalez to scramble together a majority coalition with smaller regional parties or the communist-led United Left.

The Popular Party would obtain between 134 and 148 seats, according to the poll, which surveyed 250,000 voters who cast their ballots at 2,445 voting tables.

Other polls based on smaller samples indicated the results could be much closer. See earlier story on page 8

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Reported, then denied CIA comments haunt Mubarak

By William C. Mann
The Associated Press

CAIRO — President Hosni Mubarak's government would rather the subject of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) would just go away. But it won't.

And the longer it lingers, the madder Egyptian officials get. "This is much ado about nothing," Mr. Mubarak's spokesman, Mohammed Abdul Moneim, said Saturday about the controversy over "this dwarf called Sheikh Abdul Rahman."

The radical cleric is a sometime preacher in a Jersey City, New Jersey. Some of his alleged followers face charges in the Feb. 26 bombing of New York's World Trade Center and the Immigration and Naturalisation Service is trying to deport him. But he has requested political asylum in the United States.

The sheikh makes no secret he wants to see Mr. Mubarak overthrown and has predicted the president will be killed. For his part, Mr. Mubarak says at least part of the sheikh is not worth worrying about.

On May 27, Al Gomhuria, a government newspaper in Cairo, reported that Mr. Mubarak identified Sheikh Omar as a CIA agent, living in the United States under the intelligence agency's protection. The same day, another Cairo daily published similar quotes.

Two days later, Al Gomhuria's editor retracted the story, saying he mistakenly attributed to the president comments by other people.

Presidential spokesman Abdul Moneim was exercised about an editorial in the New York Times on Friday that subtly accused the editor of lying to get the president out of a jam with Washington.

Then on Saturday Ibrahim Se'da, editor of the million-circulation Akhbar Al Yom, got into the fray. Mr. Se'da published

Arabic translations of stories from the American publications Village Voice and the New Yorker alleging CIA ties with Sheikh Abdul Rahman.

Mr. Se'da wrote that when those stories appeared, "there was absolute silence from all the departments of the U.S. administration." But let an Egyptian paper write the same thing, he wrote, and "this same silence became very noisy."

But the difference, of course, is that the Egyptian paper quoted Mr. Mubarak, president of a country where violence associated with extremist followers of the sheikh has killed more than 150 people in the past 18 months. Mr. Mubarak's reported comments received wide media coverage in the United States, but Egyptian officials said there was no official protest from Washington.

"Official protests are made only over important issues," said Naby Al Ghatrifi, Egypt's Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Two newspaper stories said Mr. Mubarak's comments were to senior editors, writers and intellectuals. When the president talks with such people, presidential spokesman Abdul Moneim said, he wants them to be candid. "One of them started talking about what he had read in an American newspaper, that Abdul Rahman was in the CIA," Mr. Abdul Moneim said. "The president laughed, but he didn't comment. He said it's not an important issue."

That leaves the curious question of how two newspapers, Al Gomhuria and Al Ahras Al Massa'i, published by technically competing publishing houses, could make the same mistake in attribution.

Mr. Abdul Moneim said a reporter for Al Ahras Al Massa'i, an afternoon paper, saw Al Gomhuria, thought he had missed a story and copied the quotes. While similar, the quotes were not identical.

U.N. still concerned over Iraqi missile programme

BAGHDAD (R) — The United Nations remains concerned that an Iraqi ballistic missile programme might violate U.N. restrictions on Iraqi weaponry, a senior U.N. inspector said Sunday. Nikita Smidovitch of Russia, a senior inspector from the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in New York, told Reuters in an interview that the programme was so big that the United Nations would have to keep an eye on it.

Under U.N. Security Council resolutions passed after the Gulf war over Kuwait, Iraq may not produce ballistic missiles with a range longer than 150 kilometres. It is now working on a missile which comes close to the limit.

"We are concerned this programme could be used for prohibited purposes. It is our responsibility... to prevent Iraq from doing that," Mr. Smidovitch said. "It has to be controlled, making sure no prohibited activity takes place there."

The extent of that programme forced us to do something. Now I guess we have a much fuller picture," he added.

Mr. Smidovitch arrived in Baghdad Friday, accompanied by 15 weapons experts from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine.

It is the 57th U.N. inspection team to go to Iraq to make sure that it scraps any biological, chemical or nuclear weapons programmes it was working on before the Gulf war and that it does not resume work in any of these areas.

Before leaving Bahrain last week, Mr. Smidovitch said the group would be concentrating on plants making liquid-fuel engines and on gyroscopes, devices which control the flight of missiles.

On Sunday he said they would survey and assess equipment and machine tools Iraq is using in the programme to make the short-range ballistic missiles.

In two previous visits this year, experts have examined solid-fuel missile systems and the research and development facilities for the missiles.

Mr. Smidovitch said Iraq had raised no objection to the United Nations monitoring the missile programme.

Apart from monitoring, the team intended to inspect several declared and undeclared Iraqi weapons sites, he added.

"We are still looking for prohibited materials. We know something is wrong in certain areas," he said.



TURKS ENRAGED: Angry protesters shout slogans against neo-Nazism in Germany demonstration Saturday in the Turkish town of Tasova. Five

Turkish women and children were killed in an arson attack in Solingen blamed on neo-Nazis last week (AFP photo)

Libyan money stops PLO from denouncing Jerusalem pilgrimage

TUNIS (AP) — A monthly \$6 million subsidy from Libya has apparently prevented the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) from officially condemning the pilgrimage by 198 Libyans to occupied Jerusalem last week, Palestinian sources say.

Knowledgeable Palestinian sources said Colonel Muammar Qadhafi informed the PLO leadership in March about his plans to send the Libyan pilgrims but the PLO did not raise any objections.

The sources, speaking to the Associated Press on condition of not being named, said any objection by the PLO would have prompted Libya to withhold funds and close PLO military camps in Libya.

Initially, the visit angered the Palestinians and many PLO leaders denounced it as an attempt by Libya to end its isolation by luring the Israelis to its side in the conflict with the United States over the bombing of a Pan Am plane over Scotland in 1988.

The United States is demanding the extradition of two Libyans it said were involved in the bombing. Libya is under a U.N. air-travel embargo because it refused to comply.

The pilgrimage was also condemned as a premature attempt by the unpredictable leader to recognise Israel before a peace accord between the Jewish state and the Arab countries is reached.

But the PLO representative in

Baghdad ridicules Kuwaiti defence plans

NICOSIA (Agencies) — An Iraqi newspaper Sunday ridiculed Kuwait's plan to dig a protective trench along its northern frontier, comparing it to Israel's Bar-Lev line broken by Egypt in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

Al Thawra, the organ of the ruling Baath Party, said "building a line similar to Bar-Lev simulates the Zionist model, and its goal is apparently not protecting Kuwait against Iraq, as Iraq is not an enemy to Kuwait," the Iraqi News Agency reported.

Al Thawra said the aim was to "protect the rulers imposed on Kuwait, who continue to conspire against the Iraqi economy and the well-being of its people," the news agency reported.

Iraq said Kuwaiti conspiracies against the Iraqi economy led it to invade the emirate in 1990 in a defensive move.

The Kuwaitis, still apprehensive about Iraqi intentions two years after the Gulf war, want to make sure there is no repeat of the invasion, in which Iraqi troops and tanks overran the emirate in a matter of hours.

The government plans a 210-kilometre trench along the border, three metres deep and five metres wide, with a three-to-four-metre sand barrier behind it. Work is expected to begin this summer.

Although Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz has said Baghdad no longer considers Kuwait to be part of Iraq, the Iraqis have not recognised a new U.N. boundary that resulted from the Gulf war ceasefire.

Also, there have been numerous smuggling incidents and border clashes, and the Kuwaitis now have on trial a group they claim was sent by Iraqi intelligence in April to assassinate visiting former U.S. President George Bush. Iraq denies such a plot.

Al Thawra's commentary expressed doubts that the new fortifications would give Kuwait's Al Sabah family a feeling of security.

The Bar-Lev defences along the eastern bank of the Suez Canal were supposed to be impenetrable. The Egyptians, however, broke through early in the October 1973 war and had destroyed 100 Israeli tanks in the Sinai before Israel managed to regroup and reverse the course of the war.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Two Kuwaitis stand trial for killing maid

KUWAIT (R) — Two Kuwaitis accused of torturing their Filipino maid to death have pleaded not guilty in court, a local paper reported Sunday. The maid, 23-year-old Sonia Bahana who had been working in Kuwait for months, died in hospital on March 8 after being admitted in a coma and suffering severe burns and injuries. Her employers, a Kuwaiti husband and wife, had offered \$13,200 in compensation to her family, but they rejected the offer. Arab Times newspaper quoted a Philippine embassy official as saying. The husband, identified as F. Falah, has been held for the past three months, his wife, I. Issa, charged with complicity, was released on bail. The court was adjourned until July 10 at the request of the victim's lawyer. The victim's lawyer, pressing for \$330,000 in compensation, said the phenomenon of maid abuse should be faced with stricter laws. There are about 150,000 Asian domestic servants working in Kuwait, which has a total population of 1.3 million. Hundreds of the servants from the Philippines and the Indian subcontinent have complained in recent years of being beaten, raped or denied pay by employers in Kuwait.

Iraqi paper attacks Libyan pilgrimage to Jerusalem

BAGHDAD (R) — A Baghdad newspaper described a visit by 192 Libyan pilgrims to occupied Jerusalem as "a scandal" on Sunday, saying Tripoli was "bartering away everything that is beautiful in human life, including its beliefs and principles." The Libyan step "is a gift for the Zionist entity (Israel)," the Defence Ministry newspaper Al Qadisiyah under a banner headline "Shortest path to the abyss." The Libyans' visit last week was unprecedented since the entrance to Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque. Libya denied making a political overture to Israel. Al Qadisiyah said Libya's claim that the Saudi authorities prevented its pilgrims from performing this year's Hajj to Mecca was a pretext.

Hospital teaching doctors strike in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — More than 5,000 medical specialists began a week-long strike Saturday by refusing to hold university lectures in support of their claims for back pay, the official news agency APS said. The head of the National Union of Professors of Medical Science, Mohamed Fagouel quoted by APS, said that the strike by 5,672 specialists in the country's 13 teaching hospitals will not affect patients. "Hospital care, surgical operations and the different necessary services will be assured" during the strike, the union told APS. Algerian teaching hospitals, which provide tuition of medical students and specialised care for the sick; have more than 54,000 beds. The union denounced doctors' working conditions because "a lack of means, equipment and medicines." One third of professors resigned in the past five years because of "difficulties they encounter in exercising their profession," said Mustapha Khiafi, a specialist in pediatrics.

Syrian school children sit exams

DAMASCUS (R) — More than 410,000 Syrian school students sat exams on Sunday, officials said. The students were hoping gain certificates of preparatory or secondary education or for specialised technical and vocational studies.

Sudan's minister queries U.N. investigator

KHARTOUM (R) — Foreign Minister Kusein Abu Salih said Saturday Sudan was not consulted over the appointment last month of a U.N. investigator for the country and would not accept his involvement in politics. He told a news conference that the government had no problem with the appointment if the investigator's terms of reference were relief and humanitarian affairs. The government had written to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali asking for full information about the terms of reference of the investigation, Mr. Abu Salih said.

Israeli general in Beirut massacre inquiry dies

TEL AVIV (R) — Yona Efrat, a member of a state commission, that criticised Israeli leaders and generals for the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in Beirut's Sabra and Shatila camps, has died aged 66, his family said on Saturday. Israeli troops who invaded Lebanon in 1982 in an attempt to wipe out the Palestine Liberation Organisation surrounded the refugee camps while Lebanese Christian militiamen slaughtered hundreds of Palestinians. Efrat served as a retired general with two supreme court judges on the commission, which found Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible for the massacre, forcing his resignation as defence minister.

Turkish police kill left-wing militant

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish police killed a leftist militant overnight in a shootout in an Ankara flat, the semi-official Anatolian news agency reported Sunday. The militant, a member of the outlawed urban guerrilla group Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left), one of them a woman, were captured in a raid on another Ankara home, it said. Dev-Sol has claimed responsibility for numerous attacks on security targets.

Iran plans funeral for November crash victims

NICOSIA (AP) — Funeral services are planned Monday for 15 people aboard an Iranian helicopter that crashed in November on the ice-capped Zagros Mountains, Iran's news agency said Sunday. The snow-covered bodies were recovered last week after the wreckage of the Energy Ministry helicopter was found following an extensive search by 10 military teams over 2,000 square kilometres, the Islamic Republic News Agency said. At the time of the crash, rescue efforts were futile because of the mountainous area of western Iran was covered with heavy snow.

Israeli allies unhurt by bomb blast

MARIYOUN (R) — A roadside bomb blew up near an Israeli-backed militia patrol in southern Lebanon Sunday but caused no casualties, security sources said. The bomb in the Aishiyeh area inside Israel's self-declared "security zone" exploded while the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia patrol was a few dozen metres away, they said. Roadside bombs are the commonest and deadliest weapon used by guerrillas bent on ending Israel's occupation of the south.

Somali fighting challenges U.N. peacekeeping mission

By Jonathan Clayton

REUTERS
NAIROBI — The killing by Somali gunmen of at least 28 Pakistani U.N. Blue Helmets poses a major challenge to the world body and could wreck a ground-breaking attempt to rebuild the shattered Horn of Africa country.

Independent analysts said the attack could signal the start of a guerrilla war between the 20,000-strong, multi-national force and militias of ruthless warlords, desperate to hang on to the power they clawed out from the carcass of the Somali state.

"The United Nations will have to kick back hard, or pack its bags. If it tries to muddle through with resolutions and compromise it is sending its men to the gallows," an analyst told Reuters.

At least 28 Pakistanis were

killed and dozens wounded on Saturday during what the U.N. says was a routine inspection of a local militia weapons depot at an old tobacco factory on the western edge of the ruined capital, Mogadishu.

"They were picked off like rabbits. This will be seen as a big victory," said a foreigner working in the capital.

The Pakistanis had to be rescued by Italian troops serving in the 30-nation group. The Italians sent in a column of 12 tanks and six armoured cars to rescue 80 Pakistanis and 10 U.S. soldiers.

Three Americans were wounded in the battle. Hospital reports more than a dozen Somalis killed and scores injured.

Experts have been waiting for Somali gunmen to test the resolve of the U.N. since it took over control of the operation from United States forces just

over a month ago. Admiral Jonathan Howe, the U.N.'s special envoy to Somalia, told Reuters on Sunday the attack "had been pre-announced and planned."

He said it was one of the worst days in the history of U.N. intervention, but declined to be drawn on how the world body would respond.

NEWS ANALYSIS

"That's the problem. They talk tough but do nothing," said an aid worker with months of experience of Somalia. "They must hit back hard or go home. It is as simple as that."

General Mohammad Farah Aidede, the country's most powerful warlord, has skillfully exploited a deep distrust and dislike by many Somalis of the United Nations, blamed for

propping up the discredited former dictator Mohammad Siad Barre.

General Aidede welcomed the presence of U.S. troops in the country, originally to police famine relief supplies, but has always been hostile towards the U.N. role in the operation.

In January, violent demonstrations by his supporters forced Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to cut short a visit to Mogadishu.

Since Washington handed over control of the U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) to Turkish General Cevik Bir on May 4, Gen. Aidede and his closest ally, Ahmad Omar Jess who holds sway in the southern port of Kismayu, have launched a propaganda campaign against the U.N. presence.

In recent weeks, U.N. troops have been accused to

torturing and beating up Somali prisoners and raping Somali women. There has been no evidence such claims are true.

After the battle, Gen. Aidede told U.N. troops to leave areas "captured today."

Pro-Aidede radio quoted him as advising UNOSOM to "remove its forces from the places they captured today and other sensitive places where people live. This includes the police command and the second battalion, and the centre of the city."

Pakistan immediately demanded a closed-door session of the U.N. Security Council and urged the world body to take punitive action against their assailants.

On Sunday, Mogadishu was calm, but aid agencies scrubbed flights to the capital and the airport was closed to non-military flights.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDER

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 73111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
16:08	Quentia Durward
16:30	News in French
16:50	Magazine Sportif
17:10	News in Hebrew
17:30	News in Arabic
17:50	The Powers that Be
18:10	Documentary
18:30	News in English
18:50	Jordan Weekly
19:10	Feature Film
PRAYER TIMES	
03:53	Fajr
05:26	Sunrise (Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:33	Dhuhr
16:14	Asr
19:42	Maghrib
21:16	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 310720	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrazanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625541	
Anglican Church Tel. 652626, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823624, 654932	
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
A relatively cold front will affect the region. Therefore, drop in temperatures will take place and clouds will appear at various altitudes. There will also be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be northwesterly fresh. In Amman, it will be dusty and winds will be southerly fresh and seas rough.	
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USEFUL NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Saad Ali	782285
Dr. Walid Al Masri	675485
Dr. Nasser Mohammad	204660
Dr. Mohammad Al Nahaw	63925
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdous pharmacy	778336
Al Asoma pharmacy	637865
Nasrallah pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
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International award council meetings open

Prince Edward praises achievements of Crown Prince programme

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Sunday called on organisations concerned with development of human resources in Jordan and the Middle East to direct special attention to preparing youth and providing them with opportunities to contribute to the establishment of peace in the region.

Addressing the International Council Meeting of the International Award which started here Sunday were Prince Hassan and Prince Edward of England, the council's chairman.

In his address Prince Hassan said that youth under 18 years of age constitute 40 per cent of Jordan's population.

He noted that Jordan relies heavily on this sector of its population to contribute towards improving the quality of life, either through the Crown Prince Award or any other forums such as the Youth Parliament and sports activities.

The Crown Prince Award programme is open to all youth aged 14 to 25 to encourage them to participate in four extracurricular educational activities, namely services, skills, trips and sports activities.

The award encourages self-challenge and promotes participation rather than competition. It also provides an opportunity for disabled children to participate in the award activities.

The award seeks, among other things, to strengthen the sense of belonging, enhance active participation and bridge the gap between the younger generations and adults.

Prince Hassan said these endeavours are mainly designed to provide a better world through the eyes of children.

As examples he cited the "Peace Child" play performed in Jordan and abroad, youth parliaments and other activities of the Crown Prince Award.

Prince Hassan said his participation in the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held in Vienna within the next few days, will give him the opportunity to talk about such projects, which are based on common thinking, mutual interaction and participation.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prince Edward of England and participants Sunday begin the International Council Meeting of the International Award in Amman hosted by the Crown Prince Award (Petra photo)

The morning session, held at the University of Jordan, portrayed the history of Amman through literature. Panelists read from their own personal diaries and from 19th century English travel accounts, the rare primary sources that tell of the area's daily life.

Jean Hannoyer, Amman office director of CERMO, the French Centre for Research on the Contemporary Middle East, said that although academic texts all seem to converge on the history of the city — an ancient abandoned site, the settlement of the Circassians, the foundation of the capital, an example of exceptional urban growth — more questions need to be answered about "who is Amman?"

The roots of modern Amman, according to Mustafa Hamarneh, professor of history at the University of Jordan, date back to 1878, when small groups of Circassians settled in what is today known as downtown Amman.

This new city, according to Eugene Rogan, professor of history at Oxford University, was chosen as the new capital, replacing Salt, to accompany the process of creating a new state.

Amman, panelists concurred, grew on the shoulders of migrants, starting with Circassians and later including Palestinians, Lebanese, Syrians and Armenians. The city was unable to melt the barriers of these communities and develop a distinct identity, they maintained.

Merchants played a significant role in the development of the city, panelists said.

Abla Amawi, professor of political science at Georgetown University, stressed that the growth of Amman as a metropolis is the story of the rise of the merchant class, the economically dominant class.

Fani Al Hourani, director of the New Jordan Research Centre spoke about "the geography of cultural institutions in Amman," questioning the existence of a uniform identity for Amman.

Cultural centres, he said, have become more visible since the launching of the democratisation process. Unfortunately, Mr. Hourani added, most of these centres tend to be superficial.

In addition, he indicated the gap between eastern and western Amman, in terms of the presence of cultural centres.

Mr. Hourani asserted that cultural centres are found in abundance in the western part of Amman, but are almost non-existent in the eastern part. Mosques, he added, tend to replace these centres in the east.

The evening session, entitled "The City Morphology and Ecology," further emphasised the difference between east and west Amman.

Elmar Ditman, professor of architecture at the University of Jordan, contrasted the densely populated, traditional, low-income eastern area to the less densely populated, international, high-income area of western Amman.

He said passing through eastern Amman one can detect that he/she is in the Middle East, but passing through western Amman, it seems as if it is an international town.

Dr. Ditman added that government policies and private enterprise further widen this gap; "two thirds of the heavy investment and infrastructure" are located in western Amman.

He fears the "neglecting" of the old city because of the movement of commercial activities away from the downtown area and stresses that private enterprise should not dictate the planning strategy of Amman.

"The city is the best teller of the people and its society," said Taleb Rifai, professor of architecture at the University of Jordan.

He outlined the construction of the city, starting in Saq Al Sail and ending in the vast metropolitan area known as Amman today. "A story of a town that grew in a bit more than 100 years into a big city."

Dr. Rifai said that the growth of the city is not by itself alarming; what is alarming, he asserted, is the unbalanced growth and the distinct barriers between east and west. With the increase in population, Dr. Rifai said, the east did not grow in geographical size, but became

more densely populated, while the west spread out geographically.

The increase in geographic size, creates a problem because it is growing beyond the available resources and results in part of the city losing touch with its base, he added.

The lack of an Ammani identity is also reflected in the city's architecture.

"The city has no architectural identity," said Ihsan Fethi, professor of architecture at the University of Jordan.

Houses in eastern Amman, tend to be similar, traditional and pay little attention to style, partly because of the lack of financial ability, he said.

But, Dr. Fethi added homes in western Amman represent a variety of styles, some imitating Western architecture and others emphasising Islamic architecture, depending on the image the owners want to portray of themselves.

He concluded by saying that "Amman needs more housing than houses;" it needs an efficient public transportation system more than individual vehicles; it needs collective work and a sense of belonging to combat the high level of individualism among Jordanians.

The conference continues through Tuesday discussing the role of the family in urbanisation; the use of urban space and architectural vernacular; urban space and social groups; the economy and society of the city; and politics and policies in Amman.

Conferees search for an 'Ammani' identity

By Sausan Ghosheh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The absence of a distinct "Ammani" identity was one of the main themes of a conference Sunday, entitled "Amman: The City and Its Society."

The morning session, held at the University of Jordan, portrayed the history of Amman through literature. Panelists read from their own personal diaries and from 19th century English travel accounts, the rare primary sources that tell of the area's daily life.

Jean Hannoyer, Amman office director of CERMO, the French Centre for Research on the Contemporary Middle East, said that although academic texts all seem to converge on the history of the city — an ancient abandoned site, the settlement of the Circassians, the foundation of the capital, an example of exceptional urban growth — more questions need to be answered about "who is Amman?"

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Railway plans to transport 4.5m tonnes of phosphate to Aqaba for export, yearly

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Railway Corporation, which last year transported 2,850,388 tonnes of phosphate from the mines in southern Jordan to Aqaba for export by sea, plans to raise the figure to 4.5 million tonnes annually, according to a corporate spokesman Sunday.

The increase is expected to follow the implementation of several projects and the renewal of rails to ensure speedy delivery to Aqaba harbour, said the spokesman.

As part of the projected plans, the corporation has already bought 90 trucks to transport additional quantities of phosphate and has offered a tender to a local firm for the maintenance of rails and locomotives at Aqaba-based workshops, noted the spokesman.

The corporation has so far relied on 39 diesel-powered locomotives, each attached to 34 compartments or cars, and on 300 trucks to help transport the mineral to Aqaba.

Along the line which connects the network of rails from the mines to the port lie 18 stations supplied with technical team and equipment to control and direct the trains and ensure safety on the way, the spokesman added.

He said the corporation is currently reviewing studies on laying a new 49-kilometre railway line linking the present network with the Shideh mines at an estimated cost of JD 50 million.

The new plans are deemed necessary to meet the growing international demand for Jordanian phosphate, which is currently transported to Asian, African and European countries.

The railway linking the mines with the Aqaba port was laid in the early 1960s. The 292-kilometre network links Al Hasa, Al Abiad and Shideh mines with the harbour, under the supervision and administration of the Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC), the spokesman explained.

But in the early 1960s also, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company operated trains transporting phosphate from the now closed Russeifa mines near Amman to Ras Al Naqab in southern Jordan where trucks later hauled the load to Aqaba, the spokesman recalled.

Referring to the history of railways in Jordan, he said that they existed in the Kingdom since the early 1900s when the Ottomans built the Hijaz Railway Line linking Damascus with Medina via Amman and Ma'an.

He said, at the start of the World War I, the Ottomans used the railways to suppress rebellions in the Arab World against Ottoman rule.

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Delegations leave for multilateral water talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan's delegation to the Middle East multilateral peace talks on water Sunday left Amman for Vienna to participate in the talks which will open there Monday.

The three-day meetings will discuss issues related to water in desert and semi-arid areas in the Middle East.

The delegation is headed by Mahmoud Al Duweiri and includes Ali Eghzawi and Akram Al Jumeidi.

Also Sunday, the Palestinian delegation to the water talks left Amman for Vienna.

Riyadh Al Husari, who is heading the Palestinian team told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that more than 20 countries will take part in the meetings which were convened by the Austrian government upon a recommendation by the Middle East multilateral working group on water last September in Washington.

Dr. Husari said the Palestinian delegation will present a working paper on means of reaching the highest levels of agricultural productivity in Palestine by using less irrigation water.

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Conservationist urges peaceful uses of natural resources

AMMAN (Petra) — President of the Jordanian Society for the Conservation of Nature (JSCN) Anis Muasher Sunday stressed the importance of utilising available natural resources to ensure security and stability in the world, rather than to manufacture weapons, which kill people and exhaust resources.

In Sunday's opening speech before the four-day regional conference of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Regional Council for Western Asia and North Africa, Dr. Muasher reaffirmed Jordan's commitment to the conservation of nature and pledged its full support for the IUCN's activities in carrying out its mandate of protecting the environment and nature.

Dr. Muasher said Jordan was one of the first countries to have announced an international strategy for the protection of the environment.

He added that Jordan has also worked out a national strategy for the conservation of nature, in cooperation with the IUCN.

He pointed out that the RSCN has been involved in studies carried out over the past fifteen years in cooperation with the IUCN on the establishment of 12 wildlife reserves. Dr. Muasher noted that six out of the 12 reserves have already been established, and the remaining six will be completed by the year 2000.

He called on the conference participants to launch an appeal for peace and for the utilisation of natural resources in peaceful endeavours rather than in the production of tools of destruction.

The conference will discuss the possibility of establishing a regional office for the IUCN in Amman and an environmental training centre.

The RSCN has had plans to establish such a centre in Jordan, according to Dr. Muasher.

The proposed centre will include a library, a data bank on environment and a natural life museum.

Representatives of the IUCN for Western Asia Abdul Wahab Al Daqqa called on the conference to develop practical resolutions serving environmental projects and contributing to the conservation of the region's nature.

Representative of the IUCN Patrick Donnham stressed the importance of developing the union's supported projects in Western Asia and North Africa.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Princess Sarvath opens abstract exhibit

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan Sunday opened a joint art exhibition by Doudi Tabba' and Nawal Qattan. On display at the French Cultural Centre are 90 abstract drawings by the two artists. The opening ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture Mahmoud Al Samra and French Ambassador to Jordan Denis Buchard.

Government, public offices to close Thursday

AMMAN (Petra) — All government departments and public institutions will be closed Thursday June 10 in observance of the anniversary of the Great Arab Revolt and Army Day in Jordan. The announcement came via an official communique from the Prime Minister's office Sunday.

Labour group leaves for Copenhagen talks

AMMAN (Petra) — A delegation representing the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions left Sunday for Copenhagen on a week-long visit to Denmark at the invitation of the Danish Labour Unions. The delegation, which is led by Khaled Shreim, the federation's secretary general, will meet with labour union leaders in Denmark and discuss cooperation between the two sides in the exchange of expertise in labour related affairs.

Centre plans summer programmes for children

IRBID (Petra) — The Princess Basma Social and Community Centre which is affiliated to the Queen Alia Fund (QAF) has announced plans to organise cultural and sports programmes for the benefit of 150 children within the Irbid governorate. A spokesman said that children, aged 7 to 12, will profit from the programmes which include music lessons. QAF instructors will supervise the programmes which will last two months.

PSD reports 176 crimes for last week

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday reported a drop in the number of reported crimes committed in the Kingdom last week. A total of 176 crimes of various kinds and levels were reported, registering a decline of 8.3 per cent over the previous week said a PSD statement. Only one murder was reported, but there were 112 robberies and thefts, 88 per cent of which have been solved. The other cases included three smuggling operations, six car thefts, one suicide, 12 fraud cases and 19 moral offenses.

Azerbaijani minister due in Amman for tourism talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism in Azerbaijan Ali Asker is due here Tuesday on a visit to Jordan. The minister, who will be accompanied by an official delegation, is expected to hold talks with Jordanian officials on cooperation in tourism.

Tafleh to fight stray dogs problem

TAFLEH (Petra) — The local public safety committee announced here Sunday that a large-scale campaign to deal with stray dogs will start on June 15 in Tafleh governorate. The announcement was made following a committee meeting which reviewed recent reports about the noticeable increase in the number of stray dogs.

Minister reviews secondment of teachers

AMMAN (Petra) — An education delegation from Qatar Sunday met in Amman with Education and Higher Education Minister Khaled Al Omari to discuss the secondment of Jordanian teachers to Qatar.

The Qatari delegation was led by Seif Al Kuwari, assistant under secretary to the Ministry of Education, who paid tribute to Jordanian teachers working in his country.

These teachers, he said, present an excellent performance and are offering a unique service to Qatar.

Dr. Omari underlined Jordan's keenness to bolster ties with Arab states in educational and cultural fields.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

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Untimely and insensitive decision

KUWAIT'S DECISION to end its boycott of Israel is wrong on two counts: First, by unilaterally ending its traditional boycott of the Jewish state without prior consultation with the Arab countries, and without going through the proper Arab channel, the Arab League, the Kuwaiti leadership is in effect boycotting the Arab World and all that Arabism stands for. Second, this seemingly gratuitous Kuwaiti step attempts to unravel the Arab reasoning and justification for imposing the 42-year-old Arab boycott.

It must be realised that the Arab boycott of Israel was adopted collectively by the Arab governments more than four decades ago. It is a well-known fact that what brought about the unified Arab stand was the Israeli aggression not only against the Palestinians but also against the neighbouring Arab states. A state of war between Israel and several Arab countries ensued and remains in place in spite of the passage of more than forty years. It would seem more sensible and logical to start thinking in terms of terminating this collective Arab policy only after the existing state of war comes to an end and not before. After all, the basic feature of a state of war between two more states is a halt of any exchange, especially trade.

Equally disturbing is Kuwait's deliberate decision to break ranks with its closest Arab allies and friends in the Gulf. Had the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) taken a decision to the effect of opening a new chapter with Israel, one might have understood the precipitous Kuwaiti decision. The fact of the matter is that none of the other members of the GCC has endorsed the Kuwaiti initiative and none is expected to do so before the bilateral and multilateral peace talks register meaningful results.

The least that the Arab peoples would expect from their governments is to trade off the contentious Arab boycott with Israel with at least an equally valuable quid pro quo from Israel. To offer an end to Arab boycott on a silver platter in a rather gratuitous way is not exactly commendable or even good business. Israel must offer the Arab side something tangible before the Arab World can bring down the curtain on the 42-year-old Arab boycott.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE ARAB foreign ministers' meeting in Amman Sunday to unite the Arab countries' stand vis-a-vis the peace process is a clear sign to the world and the United States that the Arab parties are keen on pursuing efforts leading to peace, said Al Rai Arabic daily. The meeting is bound to end with an unanimous decision to participate in the 10th session in Washington despite the previous setbacks, predicted the daily. The meeting here is an indication that the Arabs are searching for a way that would result in the restoration of their nation's rights and lost homeland, but it is up to the world community in general and the United States in particular to see to it that U.N. Security Council resolutions concerning the Arab rights are implemented, demanded the daily. The paper said that the United States, which had claimed it would play the role of full partner, has also announced it would not be in line with any party that might take a hostile course to peace. What the Arabs expect from Washington now, said the paper, is a translation of intentions into actions, not words, and a meaningful action to force the Israelis to comply with U.N. resolutions and respect the Palestinians' human rights.

A COLUMNIST in Sawt Al Shaab daily dwelt on the ethnic violence in Germany and the general hostile attitude in the West against the Muslims of Europe. Salamah Ekour said that encouraged by the ongoing aggression on the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is being condoned by the West, the Germans are now turning their guns on the Muslim Turks. The writer said that a campaign is under way in Germany, France and the United Kingdom to stem the presence of Muslims in Europe, directing its wrath, in the first place, against the Muslim workers in these countries. The neo-Nazis in Germany are following in the footsteps of the barbaric Serbs who are killing the Muslims of former Yugoslavia, charged the writer. He said that this brutal war against the Muslims of Europe, and the ethnic cleansing operations, constitute the worst kind of racial and religious discrimination, an affront to mankind and a flagrant violation of human rights. What is surprising here is to see Turkey not lifting a finger or expressing protest against this genocide and not moved by the terrorist campaigns against the Muslim people of the Balkans, in contrast, said the writer. The tragedy of the Muslim people in Europe, he added, underlines the fact that the Western countries are totally committed to eradicate the Muslim people and this calls for a reappraisal of Islamic countries' relations with the Western world.

Weekly Political Pulse

Premier is here to stay

Dr. Abdul Salam Al Majali's government has been described by many observers as simply a caretaker or an interim government with specific mandates and a short agenda. A closer look at the background of the events, both domestic and regional, would give another interpretation to the mission of the new government. To begin with, even though the mandate of the government appears to be concise and limited, its nature and implications are indeed overwhelming. Take for example the obvious agenda of Dr. Majali's cabinet. Many people here in Jordan and abroad view the obvious and unequivocal commitment of Dr. Majali to the peace process and his not so clear commitment to change the electoral law in the country as two separate issues. The fact of the matter is that both items are organically linked and affect each other.

There is no way that Jordanians would have the opportunity to exercise judgment on any peace accord that would be negotiated with Israel in the future peace rounds unless there is a parliament that truly represents them and their thoughts and aspirations. Against such a backdrop, amending the existing laws on elections in Jordan is a sine qua non to any future endorsement of any breakthrough attained in the Jordanian-Israeli track.

What is most interesting about the new government is the personal profile of Dr. Majali himself. Often described by people who know him best as a no-nonsense person, this trait would be only one of the positive features of the man. I heard him make a speech before His Majesty King Hussein some twenty years ago when he was the head of the Armed Forces medical corps. It was so different in style and content that I immediately thought it was

only a matter of time before Dr. Majali would become a prime minister. When he finally made it a few days ago, my only surprise was that it took so long to recruit this man for a leadership post in the country.

Being a scientist, Dr. Majali tends to be precise, pragmatic and direct to the point of bluntness. Many Jordanians feel that the country needs such a man not only for a temporary period but rather for a longer time.

It is doubtful that Dr. Majali would be jettisoned soon after November, especially if he personally succeeds in steering the Kingdom onto the right path.

I cannot understand the wisdom of letting a man change the electoral law and pursue peace with Israel on just and comprehensive terms if he is destined to be dumped soon after such objectives are attained or nearly achieved. Therefore, I am one of those minority groups who project that Dr. Majali is no five-month-term prime minister but rather a man who will end what he is embarking on doing.

In the course of this year, we may look for one or two major reshuffles in Majali's cabinet. I personally expect him to stick around for a couple of years at least.

If the peace process registers meaningful advancement in the upcoming few months, then this project can be expected to solidify even more. But whatever happens in the future internally or externally, it would be naive to think of Dr. Majali's government as only a caretaker government. Had this been the intention of His Majesty King Hussein, he would have picked another kind of man for the job.

By Waleed Sadi

Germany — the grandchildren need new politics

By Hanns W. Maull

TRIER, Germany — When the Berlin wall came down and the Soviet empire started to collapse, the western countries became victims of an illusion. They watched the Warsaw Pact and Comecon going down the drain, communist parties disintegrating and regimes crumbling, and they observed, stunned, as the Soviet Union disappeared with a whimper rather than a bang. They looked at all this as if from a firm base.

In fact, the very forces that tore into the East's ossified political structures and its military and economic alliances were also chipping away at the political foundations of the West.

As the dust of communism's collapse settles, we are witnessing an alarming erosion of western solidarity, of the rules of the world trading system, of European integration.

Nor are domestic politics immune. It is coming unhinged before our eyes. Take the case of Germany. The German polity is showing strains and tensions. We may be observing the beginnings of a thorough redefinition of Germany's postwar politics.

This does not mean that the federal republic will turn back to authoritarianism or fascism. Rather, one might expect an evolution towards a new type of democratic system with as yet undefined contours. The present mold of German politics no longer fits the country's new responsibilities, the challenges of adjustment that it faces at home and abroad. Something will have to give — and it will be politics.

One of the most striking aspects of this strain is the shortage of political leaders in the successor generation. The political "grandchildren" of Konrad Adenauer and Willy Brandt have had a hard time surviving, let alone thriving.

Earlier this month came to two major resignations in five days: those of Björn Engholm, leader of the opposition Social Democrats, who gave up all his party positions after admitting to having lied to a parliamentary committee of inquiry; and of Günther Krause, transport minister and one of the few political talents from the former East Germany to survive in Bonn. He was forced to step down after repeatedly using his political positions for personal advantage.

Those resignations tell only part of the story. Mr. Krause was the eighth minister to leave the Kohl cabinet in 13 months; other leading political figures have been damaged, sometimes irredeemably. These include Defence Minister Volker Rühe, a Christian Democrat once considered a leading contender to succeed Helmut Kohl. He has been seriously damaged by turmoil over the restructuring of the armed forces, and by his failed efforts to withdraw from (or redefine) the horribly expensive joint European Fighter Aircraft project.

Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, of the Free Democrats, who is to take over leadership of his small party soon, has seen his reputation shaken by his handling of the issue of Bundeswehr participation in U.N.-sponsored peacekeeping operations. Doubts have arisen about his ability to shoulder the twin burdens of foreign minister and party leader.

Oskar Lafontaine, the Social Democratic candidate for the chancellorcy in 1993, has been

damaged by allegations of financial irregularities and possible ties to criminals. But his position as prime minister of Saarland remains secure.

Behind all these tarnished careers lies a more worrying problem: the dearth of credible younger politicians. Of the big parties, only Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats are today firmly led by an uncontested leader. This is probably more than coincidence; it may point to changes in the way parliamentary democracy functions here. Consider these underlying changes:

German parties have become more like the society they represent — unruly, divisive, complex and immobile. The task of pulling divergent strands together and mobilising competing ideas, forces and personalities around a unified agenda and a core group of leaders has become Herculean. The glue of common conviction that makes parties effective has weakened. Strong personalities alone cannot compensate for this lack.

In any case, the right personalities may not be available. The talents and skills needed to rise within modern party structures differ more and more from those same parties, and ship of state. A career as a professional politician in today's Germany involves the ability to strike compromises, to find common denominators, to secure support from divergent sources — in short, to be everybody's darling, or a superior manipulator of a large number of levers of power.

Once at the top, political leaders are given little time to learn on the job. Voters and party members have grown impatient. Results are expected quickly, yet these are little willingness to commit oneself to support. Politics has become a spectator sport in which the team coach is hailed, one-day and fired the next.

The media's role has changed politics profoundly. Journalists have engaged politicians in a game of collusive manipulation and competitive destruction. Politicians fall over each other to service the media — but if they slip up, the chase is on. — Politics itself has become more complex, less certain. The parties' traditional policy orientations — social democracy, the social market economy, liberalism, even environmentalism — no longer provide assured political backing by captive voters, nor adequate answers for ever more interrelated, and hence intractable, problems. For years, German politics benefited from material gains that outstripped rising expectations. Today, expectations are outstripping politicians' ability to deliver.

What does all this mean for the future of German politics? Germany seems to have entered a period of transition, with growing uncertainty and fluidity. In this blurred tableau, the one element of stability is the towering figure of the chancellor, who controls his party with an iron fist. Given his control and the timing of the next elections — late in 1994, by which time the economy probably will have regained momentum — he may again turn out to be the winner. It would be a Pyrrhic victory — postponing but not resolving the redefinition of German politics — International Herald Tribune.

Why I want to rule Russia

By Alexander Rutskoi

WHY DO I want to run for president of Russia against Boris Yeltsin? Because someone must prevent him and the pseudo-democrats he surrounds himself with from seizing the destiny of my country. These men are not democrats, but have compromised the entire democratic idea.

The main idea of democracy is not equality, but equal rights under the law. Under such a system, everyone in society would be subject to the rule of law — including a president who seems to think he can continue to violate the constitution without end, and including those in his immediate circle who have been touched by corruption.

As a result of the mishandling of political and economic reform by the pseudo-democrats, Russia today is in a state of absolute wild instability. According to a recent international study, only a year and a half ago, Russia ranked 20th in the world in terms of financial reliability and political risk; now we are ranked at 149. My chief task as I now see it is to help consolidate our society so that we can leave this ramshackle reality behind us.

The bungled approach to economic reform, which has proceeded without first establishing a legal basis for privatisation, has caused vast and rapidly widening discrepancies in wealth, feeding corruption and crime. It is the catalyst of the criminal underworld. Clamping down with force on crime is, in the end, useless without the established rule of law. The well-being of a society ultimately depends on to what degree the laws are observed by its citizens.

Especially in our foreign economic activities, the criminal situation is getting out of control. Hard currency is flowing out to foreign banks and Russian assets are being sold off illegally and for peanuts. It is like a one-way street — everything from Russia, nothing for Russia.

Yet the warnings I have given to President Yeltsin remain unheeded. Is it conceivable that an American president might receive frequent reports from his vice-president that there is growing corruption in the highest echelons of power, yet do absolutely nothing? What can it mean when the president sets up a commission to fight corruption and crime, of which I am a member, and then forbids his aides to pass to me documents detailing, for example, corruption in the armed forces of the

western region?

The president has now ordered a search to determine who is leaking information to the commission. Can it be that the corruption issue is not now being widely discussed because the actual circle of the president has been touched? I have no right to speak of someone's guilt. That is up to the courts. But very interesting materials are in my possession that may well come in handy. If I or anyone from my secretariat loses even one hair, all these materials will immediately be made public.

From this perspective it pains my soul when the United States and European states say: "We support Boris Yeltsin because there is no alternative." The people of Russia are tired of having

no alternatives. We had no alternative to Gorbachev, no alternative to Brezhnev, no alternative to Stalin and no alternative to Lenin. And why? Because we did not have the rule of law.

It is hard to understand the support of the West for Boris Yeltsin, a man who continually violates the constitution and whose policies are leading to the absolute decay and destruction of the country's economy. This policy of the West is unnecessarily creating resentment among the majority of the Russians who don't support the president's policies.

In what other democracy would you find a situation where the president or his ministers are required by law to report to the

parliament, but just ignore the summons at will? In what other state can a president be sworn into office to uphold the constitution, and then six months later say, "This is not a constitution"? Aren't the Russian people then entitled to ask why he swore his oath of office on that constitution?

In other democratic states, wouldn't a new constitution need to be drawn up with the parliament in a civilised manner, not produced all of a sudden from behind a corner? What sort of democracy is this that the West is so wholeheartedly promoting in Russia?

The West's answer to all these questions is that Boris Yeltsin was victorious in the recent referendum on his presidency and his policies. This is a wrong view. From the real political ground in Russia, there was no victory at the polls.

Look at the arithmetic. Out of roughly 148 million people in Russia, 107 million have the right to vote. According to the referendum law, the counting of percentages in favour or against the listed propositions proceeded from those who have the right to vote, not those who actually voted.

Of the roughly 60 million who actually voted, 32 million supported Yeltsin. That means 75 million did not. It is a real stretch to call that a mandate. This, after all, was not an election for political office, but a referendum on the course of social transformation.

Russia has only one path to rebirth. Only an approach of national accord, not a politics of polarisation, can get us out of the cul-de-sac. Despite what many in the West think, there is an alternative to Boris Yeltsin's pseudo-democratic misadventures. That alternative is immediate new elections for both the presidency and the parliament.

In the current indeterminate situation, further wrangling to determine who is legitimate and who is not will only worsen the crisis. The earlier we have new elections, the quicker stability will set in. The catalysts of change can finally end in 1993, if stabilised through a government of national accord.

Alexander Rutskoi is vice-president of Russia although he has been stripped of executive powers by Boris Yeltsin following the referendum row. The article is reprinted from New Perspectives Quarterly Los Angeles Times.



Germany's Social Democrats go public with leadership battle

By Kevin Liffey
Reuter

ESSEN, Germany — The tinsel and razzamatazz may be missing but there is a hint of the American primary in the way Germany's opposition Social Democrats (SPD) are looking for a new leader.

The centre-left party, leaderless and down in the opinion polls, has opted for the first time to open up the smoke-filled rooms and let its members vote for their next leader.

With 875,000 members to be canvassed, the candidates have suddenly had to go out beating the drum for themselves in wide-open race where the clubby old rules no longer apply.

"Don't kid yourself, the only way to reach most party members is through television," Gerhard Schroeder, 49-year-old premier of Lower Saxony state, told a rally when more traditional SPD members accused him of self-promotion.

"Anybody who says different is exaggerating the impact of our

party newspaper."

Mr. Schroeder was campaigning in the SPD region around Essen, in the Ruhr Valley heartland of Germany's heavy industry, a traditional stronghold for the party's trade union wing.

Western Westphalia region is in SPD terms what California is to U.S. presidential candidate — the big prize.

Mr. Schroeder's brash style is tailored to appeal to both the cameras and the local blue-collar audience in the same hall where the party assembly picks its leader on June 25.

It could not be further from the stiff and grey image of his main rival, Rheinland-Palatinate state Premier Rudolf Scharping, who whipped up little enthusiasm at his own Ruhr Area rally in Dortmund earlier in the week.

"Scharping moves around his own office so discreetly he could be a visitor," the weekly newspaper Die Woche wrote.

But 45-year-old Scharping, who stands to the right of Mr. Schroeder, has the ear of the party leadership and some com-

mentators are calling him the favourite.

His strength is in using his aura of integrity to forge consensus at local committee meetings and in contacts with churches, unions and universities.

"We won't get unity if politicians only talk to each other. The people must be brought into the discussion... this has all been neglected up till now," he told the news weekly Focus.

When Björn Engholm resigned as party leader over a six-year-old political scandal in early May, Mr. Scharping was addressing a local school on "violence and racism."

By contrast Mr. Schroeder, never one to dodge confrontation, had staked a claim to the succession even before Mr. Engholm quit.

Many SPD members, including most of the leadership, barely concealed their distaste. But they are asking themselves if they can afford to elect someone as stiff and untelegraphic as Mr. Scharping.

Schroeder is power-crazy — but the way things are now, I'd rather have the latter," said local party member Rainer Marschan at the Essen rally. "We need someone with the power to pull the cart out of the mud."

"We have to have someone to identify with who will square up to the government," added SPD member Klaus-Peter Regiani.

For many in the SPD, one answer to Mr. Scharping's lack of charisma could be a double ticket, with the controversial but undeniably charismatic Saarland Premier Oskar Lafontaine as challenger to topple Chancellor Helmut Kohl in next year's general election.

Many members still hanker for the sharp-tongued Lafontaine, an ideological motor in the SPD, to take a lead role in spite of suffering a heavy defeat when he stood against Mr. Kohl in the 1990 election.

Mr. Lafontaine would like to be the challenger but is not running for chairman, Mr. Scharping has been cagey on whether, as chairman, he would ask his friend and

ally to stand against Mr. Kohl. Mr. Schroeder, on the other hand, has no time for Mr. Lafontaine and insists he will only accept the party leadership if he is also made SPD candidate for the chancellorcy — a decision the party is due to make later this year.

Some SPD members say Mr. Schroeder's unashamed desire to hold all the reins could cost him members' votes.

"If Lafontaine were sure to run for chancellor under Scharping, it would certainly lessen Schroeder's chances of becoming chairman," said Mr. Regiani.

For all Mr. Schroeder's blustery talk, he still arouses more suspicions among party members than Mr. Scharping.

"Schroeder can be an unashamed populist. Here in the Ruhr, he's telling them just what they want to hear, that East German rebuilding mustn't be at the expense of industrial suffering in the west," Mr. Regiani said.

Unlike Mr. Schroeder, Mr. Scharping is widely credited with deep sympathy for East Germany's problems. He told Focus

that "no politician should suggest that unemployment in the Ruhr... is in some way different from unemployment in Saxony or Thuringia," referring to two hard-hit eastern states.

Such comments have earned Mr. Scharping the support of SPD members in the east. But there are only 26,000 there and Mr. Schroeder realises they are insignificant compared with his Ruhr audience.

Unlike an American party convention, the party assembly in June will not be bound by the result of the members' ballot but both candidates have said they will abide by the result.

Surveys show the outcome is too close to call. On Friday the weekly Der Spiegel put Mr. Scharping ahead with 30 per cent to Mr. Schroeder's 27, with the third candidate, South Hesse SPD Chairwoman Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, a distant third on 21.

Two days earlier Die Woche put Mr. Schroeder ahead with 33 per cent to Mr. Scharping's 29 and Wiczorek-Zeul's 21.

U.N. head calls for concrete steps to protect planet

ESCWA press release

Following is the text of the message delivered by Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on the occasion of World Environment Day, 5 June:

Last June, in Rio de Janeiro, the largest ever gathering of world leaders explicitly acknowledged that protection of our common environment is an urgent requirement and that continued destruction of our environment can no longer be tolerated.

After years of environmental neglect, the crisis facing us has now been recognised. There is a new awareness of the peril in which we have already placed ourselves and of the danger to which we are rapidly heading.

If we are to succeed in preserving a viable planet for future generations, cooperation and commitment must now characterise our efforts.

The challenges that confront us are increasingly being measured in global rather than in national terms. Environmental destruc-



Boutros Ghali

tion or harm in one country, depletion of the ozone layer, destruction of the world's forests, the spread of dangerous toxins and contaminants — affects the health of the entire planet.

At Rio, in a consensus unique in the history of international relations, the world's leaders agreed on the steps that now must

be taken. "Agenda 21" outlines a plan and a concrete approach to creating environmentally sound and sustainable development.

In concrete and practical terms, sustainable development means a commitment to finding and using resources that are renewable and a more careful management of those resources that are non-renewable. It means choosing products and production processes that avoid an adverse impact on the environment. It means a greater willingness by business to take environmental factors into account. It means respecting biological diversity in agriculture, and avoiding the excessive use of harmful, energy, intensive chemicals. It means eliminating public subsidies that encourage the liquidation of our natural environmental heritage. It means addressing the acute poverty that leads parents to wish for ever more children as a buffer against the insecurities of old age. It means using preventive diplomacy to avoid the destruction of war and the waste engendered in the preparation for war.

Following is an article by Australian Anne Fairbairn reproduced from the Sydney-based newspaper The Arab World.

IT WAS a great honour for me to be invited by His Excellency Saad Batainah, the Jordanian ambassador, to the celebration in Canberra of the 40th anniversary of His Majesty King Hussein Ibn Talal's ascendancy to the throne of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

I have been visiting the Arab World for 13 years and I have made friends in all the countries I have visited, and I believe I have come to understand the people and some of the problems they are facing.

Jordan has a particular place in my heart because in 1980 it was one of the first Arab countries I visited. I have no reason to change my first impression that it is a wisely governed country.

On several subsequent visits, I have made many friends, explored Petra — "the rose red city half as old as time" — Jerash, the most ancient provincial Roman city in the Middle East and the Arab castles in the desert.

I have given talks (about Australian poetry) in the universities of Yarmouk and Jordan and I have splashed with other poets in boats at Aqaba after reciting poetry at the Jerash Festival. Each time I have visited Jordan, I have been aware of the love and respect Jordanians feel for their King and the happy atmosphere of the place.

One former Australian ambassador to Jordan, Mr. Terry Goggin, said to me recently "Living in Amman is like living in Canberra. It is very relaxed."

On my first visit to Jordan in 1980, it was explained to me that when King Hussein came to power in 1953, there was only one high school (in Salt) in the country and three primary schools, and the road system was very limited.

But the King had a vision for his country and brought about dramatic change.

There are now schools in every

village and town and many in the cities, and there are a number of universities, as well as a network of modern highways.

As a westerner who has read fairly widely about the history of the Arabs I am acutely aware of the betrayal of the Arabs by the West after World War I.

The Arabs had joined forces with the British to oust the Turks in June 1916, after they had been assured they would be helped to establish an independent Arab state. But the carving up of Arab lands after the war, compounded by the 1917 Balfour declaration, proved to be a double betrayal.

Winston Churchill, as British colonial secretary, called the Cairo Conference in 1921 to determine the future status of the liberated territories in the Arab World.

The new states born after the demise of the Ottoman empire are still there, but in only one of them does the ruling family, whose legitimacy was confirmed at the Cairo Conference, continue to survive and to function. This is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Jordan enjoys a historical continuity absent in other states, in the area created as a result of the Cairo Conference, where revolutions and coups d'etat have altered the structure of society and the basis of political legitimacy.

Jordan's continuity reflects a climate of stability, and it is happy to offer safe harbour to the many victims of violent change in neighbouring countries.

Thus King Hussein can justifiably claim to represent an authentic modern version of the ideas and objectives which inspired the proclamation of the Arab Revolt by Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali of Mecca, his great-grandfather.

The King has been constantly striving to overcome the difficulties which the political fragmentation of the old world created and to breathe life into the aspirations of Arabs for a closer participation in the shaping of their political, economic and social lives, while

sensibly taking into account the new political and demographic facts which have come into existence over the past 70 years.

King Hussein is keeping faith with the noble spirit of his great-grandfather and the ideals of the Arab Revolt by wisely leading his fellow Arabs along an evolutionary, non confrontationalist path towards long awaited lives of freedom.

Jordan's first king, Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein, was assassinated outside the Al Aqsa Mosque in 1951; the young Hussein was standing beside his grandfather when he was struck down.

Two years later King Hussein ascended the throne.

His reign has been fraught with difficulties, but always he has been wise, politically astute, compassionate and courageous.

One Arab friend has told me recently that the King has always been courteous to those Arab leaders who have criticised him, and he had the wisdom in 1956 to send British Glubb Pasha away for it was clear to him even as a very young man that Arabs must find their own solutions to Arab problems.

At the anniversary celebration in Canberra, Mr. Batainah gave a most moving speech. He explained that as Jordan moves towards the 21st century, a renaissance is occurring. The King is authorising the establishment of an office for Amnesty International in Jordan and a Centre for the Implementation of Democratic Principles and Human Rights. These offices will set an example and give hope to all those who have yearned for freedom since the Arab Revolt.

The ambassador also told his guests that the peace process is being supported by attempting to find a peace settlement that will satisfy coming generations.

"We work with our Palestinian brothers and sisters and in cooperation with other Middle Eastern countries, to assist in creating Palestinian self-determination and an autonomous state; the Jordanians and Palestinians in our country form the demographic heartland of the peace process. Intifada has been of great importance, because it has made Israel sit down and think again about the peace process. We will never abandon the Palestinians," he stressed "and we will never abandon the Iraqi children."

The ambassador explained that at the onset of the Gulf war "the King was adamant that Arab problems must find Arab solutions; we must solve our own problems."

Bilateral relations
The Australian sheep export

industry is assisting Jordan increase its capacity to process sheep, thereby enhancing Australia's export industry.

Two Australian companies, Wellard Rural Exports and Fares Rural Meat and Livestock with the Australian Meat and Livestock Corporation (AMLC), are sharing the costs of refurbishing the country's largest sheepmeat chiller, in Amman.

Australia is expected to fund an abattoir consultant to undertake pre-design work for a new abattoir in Amman.

Richard Martin, AMLC senior officer for livestock marketing explained to me that "as well as helping Australian sheep exports, Australian involvement in this early phase of the abattoir construction opens up opportunities for our engineering and equipment supply companies."

"Jordan enjoys a historical continuity absent in other states, where revolutions and coups d'etat have altered the structure of society and the basis of political legitimacy."

Once the abattoir is operating in Jordan it will become a supplier to other Middle Eastern countries, which will benefit Australia's sheep exporters.

This year, Australia expects to export 450,000 sheep to Jordan. These will consist of specified lambs and hoggets with an average live weight of 40 kilos; this amounts to about \$12.5 million.

In a letter to the mayor of Amman, AMLC Chairman Dick Austen said Australia's gift of the chiller to Amman was a demonstration of "our commitment to Jordan, and the excellent developing trade relations between the two countries."

In the long term this joint venture can only help realise Crown Prince Hassan's admirable vision for a common market to develop and expand among poorer Arab states and help them prosper.

Early in October this year, there will be a joint Trade Fair held in Amman, in which companies from Australia and New Zealand will be able to exhibit their products. Also Royal Jordanian (RJ) has secured permission

from the Australian government to fly to Australia once a week and it is hoped this will soon be increased to twice a week.

The Department of Archaeology at the University of Sydney has been working for 15 years at Pella, in north western Jordan.

Owing to spring water at Jirm Moz and good agricultural grounds, it appears from carbon dating there has been continual occupation at Pella for about 7,000 years. Many artifacts have been unearthed by the Sydney University team.

I understand the Hashemite family was the first ruling family to initiate a constituent assembly in the area and I am confident that Jordan's simultaneous pursuit of democracy and peace can be ably managed.

However I know that many Arabs agree with Palestinian-American Professor Edward Said that "the United States never supports any struggle for democracy in the area." (Some may disagree).

But his observation is understandable as Palestinians struggle for a democratic, autonomous state in a portion of what was their former homeland.

Certainly, the United States under the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, established the right to national self-determination, which led to the formation of Arab modern sovereign states; it was also Woodrow Wilson who stated in an address to Congress in 1917 that "the world must be made safe for democracy."

Western support is essential as Jordan valiantly struggles towards peace and as the King urges his political groupings towards real parliamentary democracy.

The United States as the world's most powerful nation, must take the lead, otherwise it risks losing credibility. British statesman Edmund Burke warned: "The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse."

The new world order must be founded on strong moral principles and the United States, as its instigator, must avoid self-serving, hypocritical double standards, which can only erode faith in the wisdom of western leaders and cause a drift towards a dangerous sense of frustration and anger, which soon finds expression in violent fanaticism or other forms of destabilising extremism.

Burke also said: "Good order is the foundation of all things." If world order is to be achieved, those with power must keep an eternally vigilant eye on themselves as well as the rest of the world.

Shanghai shoppers go on buying binge

By Andrew Quinn

SHANGHAI — Not so long ago, the average Chinese shopper had modest needs: a bicycle, a wrist-watch and maybe a black-and-white television set.

Welcome to Shanghai, 1993. Here's what the Chinese in the country's commercial capital are buying these days:

— A Clousonne sculpture of a flying saucer. Encrusted with semi-precious stones, it weighs as much as a watermelon. Absolutely useless, it costs the equivalent of more than one year's salary at 1,700 yuan (\$300).

— A Gucci red leather handbag. Big enough to hold little more than a bus ticket and a pack of cigarettes, it's a glamorous fashion statement for the Shanghai girl-about-town with an extra 2,080 yuan (\$365) to spend.

— A Sharp telephone-fax machine. The ultimate Japanese office appliance, its sleek good looks make up for the fact it cannot run on China's 220-volt current. Hand over 16,000 yuan (\$2,800) and it's yours.

Purchases like these may sound heady for a country where the official urban monthly income still averages only 150 yuan (\$26). But China's new policy of "reform and opening" has people reforming their shopping habits and opening their pocket books in a consumer craze that seems to know no bounds.

"People buy, they certainly buy. Money is not a problem," said an assistant at the Orient Shopping Centre, a four-floor Hong Kong joint venture that opened four months ago.

In recent months, Japan's Yaohan, Sincere of Hong Kong and Taiwan's Sunrise have all opened in Shanghai, a city of 12 million people who suddenly feel they have money to spend.

Isetan, a top-flight Japanese retailer, is putting the finishing touches on a huge store in the heart of the Huihai Road shopping district, while other department store giants including Sogo are also setting up.

"These kind of stores have a market in this city," said Jiang Juguang, deputy editor-in-chief of the city's consumer news. "The market might not be the entire city, but the stores are doing the right thing to position themselves for the future."

Most of the serious shoppers now are members of China's hot-shot new entrepreneurial class:

elaborately-coiffed women with portable phones and high heels, fleshy businessmen with diamond watches, sideburns and pagers.

The hope is to broaden the market base.

Katherine Bao, president of the new Sunrise department store in Shanghai, said her 900,000 joint-venture store was aimed at mid-income shoppers looking for a break from the crowds, noise and slack service of state department stores.

"In Chinese stores, sometimes you cannot move there are so many people. Here, we stress service."

People begin waiting outside Sunrise long before the doors open for business, eager to begin poring over a stock selection ranging from pricey imported cosmetics to made-in-China baby strollers and colourful cups and dishes.

At the Orient Shopping Centre, where items like the Gucci bag are for sale, a grand piano on a fur-topped dais in the lobby indicates the market is upscale.

"We want to stock the best things available in Shanghai," said Deputy General Manager Li Weinmin. "It is taking a while for society to understand us."

Though Mao-suited local tourists seem to outnumber the true big-spenders cruising Orient's aisles, the store has still racked up sales of about 100 million yuan (\$17.5 million) since it opened in late January.

With more international shopping giants swinging plate glass doors open to Shanghai shoppers, State stores are trying to catch up.

Just across the street from Orient, Shanghai Number Eight department store has its own new shopping centre complete with escalators and a supermarket.

The city's television viewers are deluged with peppy rap-style advertisements urging the youth market to look for what it wants at the venerable Number Seven department store.

"This has all been a big challenge," said Mr. Jiang of the consumer news. "Our consumer level is still quite low, and it is going to take time to mature."

While better-off than most of China, the average Shanghai worker still gets paid about 600 yuan (\$105) per month, meaning most can only stare enviously at the luxury displays.

Inflation, too, is a worry. The very economic reforms which

started the stampede of overseas stores into places like Shanghai have sent inflation soaring, with the cost of living rising by as much as 19 per cent.

China's progress towards a more market-oriented economy has been filled with pitfalls in the past, and as leaders in Peking talk openly of cooling the current economic fever, the glittering purveyors of luxury goods may feel the pinch.

Shanghai analysts, still in the midst of the spending spree, see little to worry about so far, however.

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AbuAwad

China orders banks to cool economic 'chaos'

HONG KONG (Agencies) — China, worried that finance is spinning out of control, has ordered banks to rein in credit, stop engaging in business and pay peasants for their summer harvest, a pro-Beijing newspaper has said.

The front-page article in the Wen Wei Po was one of the top ranks of power in Beijing fear the economy is overheating.

The report, quoting unidentified leaders, said banks were overextended. They had used credit to fuel booms in property and share markets and spent vital funds setting up their own firms, it said.

"The financial order is chaotic," the paper said.

Reforms of finance and banking in China have failed to keep step with breakneck growth. Banks have to prop up inefficient state-run firms and do not have enough autonomy to allow interest rates to regulate supply and demand for loans.

Sixteen per cent inflation in cities during the first quarter of this year spurred depositors to withdraw savings and buy gold and consumer durables. Last week, the Wen Wei said bank deposits fell 4.5 billion yuan (\$880 million) in March.

The new regulations order

banks to recover funds earmarked for major state-approved construction projects and agriculture.

"Even though the financial situation is quite serious at the moment funds for agriculture and the summer harvest must be guaranteed," the newspaper said.

Cash demands on banks are most acute in July, when the crops are harvested and the state has to pay for what it contracted farmers to plant. Last year, farmers in southwest China's Sichuan province smashed government offices when banks paid IOUs instead of cash, and Beijing is worried about peasant unrest again this year.

The newspaper said banks also are prohibited from engaging in business and must shut down their companies, which have eaten up large amounts of capital.

Senior leaders also said a rush to set up development zones had drained funds out of banks and into unprofitable fixed capital investments, the newspaper said.

Since senior leader Deng Xiaoping gave the green light to faster economic growth in early 1992, about 9,000 development zones have sprung up across the country. The zones have fuelled the property boom and contributed to rocketing prices for construction materials.

In a separate article, the Wen Wei quoted Xiao Haikuan, a senior official at the People's Bank of China, as saying banks were guilty of financing development zones with irregular loans.

"Bank loans have risen, but deposits have dropped. This has led to credit inflation, loan inflation and rising prices," he said.

Mr. Xiao also said raising interest rates could not effectively rein in credit or cool local officials' enthusiasm for breakneck growth.

"Local areas are developing with great vigour and they are not ready to admit that they are overheated, they just think other areas are overheated," he said.

Mr. Xiao said the erroneous belief that the value of the Chinese currency will drop after China joins the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had exacerbated a loss in its value. The Chinese yuan dropped to more than 10 yuan to one U.S. dollar last week at official currency exchange markets.

"The people who hold this opinion are throwing away their (yuan) and hoarding dollars," he said.

China has ruled out a drastic devaluation of the official yuan exchange rate and denied

rumours of plans to abolish foreign exchange certificates (FEC) for foreigners.

An official with the State Administration of Exchange Control (SAEC) said last week's move to lift price ceilings at foreign exchange swap centres — which led to a sharp drop of the yuan against the dollar on those markets — did not mean Beijing was planning further major currency adjustments.

"The abolition of the price ceiling is only a normal operation in the market," the unnamed official was quoted by Sunday's China Daily as saying. "So people should not be surprised at the measure or make groundless speculation."

China's currency has been under heavy pressure on the black market due to fears of inflation and a heavy demand for dollars created by a sharp rise in imports.

The SAEC on June 1 lifted rate ceilings on foreign exchange swap markets, which businesses use to balance foreign exchange needs, ending controls imposed in February to try to stem a de facto devaluation of the Chinese yuan against the dollar.

The move sent the swap centre rate for the yuan tumbling across the country. In Shanghai Friday,

it ended at a new low of 10.3160 to the dollar from 10.2310. The rate was 9.999 in Beijing and at the SAEC headquarters.

China's official exchange rate for the yuan held steady on Sunday at 5.6957.

The SAEC official said the yuan's drop against the dollar swap centre trading was temporary and predicted rates would soon stabilise closer to the official rate than to current lows.

"The official rate at present reflects the real value of the renminbi (yuan), while the rising swap market rates are abnormal," the official was quoted as saying.

"The price of the dollar in the markets will gradually reach a reasonable level and the value of the renminbi will stabilise."

The official said the decision to free the swap markets, which was not officially announced, was aimed at limiting speculation in foreign exchange.

He said that the government reserved the right to intervene in the market again, "although he ruled out the possibility that it would occur in the near future."

"Both the setting and the abolition of the price ceiling are aimed at helping the healthy growth of the foreign exchange market,

which is not fully developed in China at present," the official was quoted as saying.

China's murky currency policies have created a flood of rumours about the future of the FEC, the convertible hard currency scrip which is issued to foreigners.

The FEC, which has followed the dollar upward in black market trading against the yuan, suffered a number of setbacks in recent weeks following black market rumours that it would soon be abolished.

Yang Xianlin, a senior policy official at the SAEC, told Chinese reporters these rumours were groundless.

"He said that up to today, he has been given no notification of the abolition of the FEC," Shanghai's official Wenhuiyao said Sunday.

"The rumours that the FEC will no longer be issued and that the FEC will be abolished are without foundation," Mr. Yang was quoted as saying.

China has repeatedly said that it plans to phase out the FEC and make the yuan fully convertible as part of market reforms aimed at securing entry into the GATT.

Officials so far have given no timetable, however, and have repeatedly told people the change will not come soon.

British chancellor Clarke faces tough budget hurdle

LONDON (R) — Britain's new Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke inherited a serious budget deficit from Norman Lamont and will have to make unpopular tax and spending decisions in coming months, analysts have said.

In an interview, Mr. Lamont said the treasury might look into raising more tax from firms to curb its ballooning overhead.

"The new chancellor will get the same advice from the treasury, and the same forecasts, which is more important in this particular respect," a treasury official said.

The key forecast is that the public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) this fiscal year will be £50 billion (\$78 billion), a whopping eight per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Tax revenue has fallen to 34.5 per cent of GDP, and Mr. Lamont indicated in the Guardian newspaper interview that this would have to be boosted.

More specifically, Mr. Lamont said he was reviewing the capital allowances that companies can now use to reduce their tax bill.

"One of the questions I am interested in is to what extent our corporation tax reforms have actually lessened the yield from companies below that we might have expected," Mr. Lamont said.

"The way the deficit is, nothing can be excluded," said Nigel Rendell, an economist with James Capel, but he doubted whether the government would try to milk industry for funds.

"Any sort of tax increase would be the biggest U-turn imaginable," Mr. Rendell said, noting that lowering taxes was a key policy plank of the ruling Conservative Party.

"The way forward for them is

to cut spending. Tax increases are not philosophically sound for that party," agreed Ian Gunner, an economist with Chase Investment Bank.

But he said a combination of spending cuts and certain tax adjustments, such as another increase in value added tax (VAT), was likely in November.

The government plans to introduce a combined spending and revenue budget for the following year each November, starting this year.

Mr. Gunner felt the government would live with a high borrowing requirement for many months until growth increased tax revenue.

Other analysts said there had been some belief after the March budget that corporate taxes had not been raised or allowances pared and firms were braced for change in November.

One said that if the tentative economic recovery now under way took root, companies would be better placed to support a higher tax burden in the 1994/95 fiscal year.

On the government's current projections, the public sector borrowing requirement for 1994/95 will be £44 billion (\$68.44 billion), still 6.5 per cent of GDP.

A row broke out last month over a root and branch review for public spending being carried out by the chief secretary to the treasury, Michael Portillo.

Mr. Portillo, a right-winger who declared that no part of the social security system would be out of bounds in the search for cuts, has remained at the treasury, his stature increased by the reshuffle that took away his old boss, Mr. Rendell said.

India needs \$3b a year to finance deficit

NEW DELHI (R) — India will need "exceptional financial arrangements," or foreign loans, of \$3 billion a year in the medium term to finance its balance of payments deficit, a government-appointed committee has said.

It basically agreed with Finance Minister Manmohan Singh who said last week that India needed \$2 to \$3 billion a year for the next three years in exceptional financing from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank.

The committee, headed by Reserve Bank of India Governor C. Rangarajan, projected that the current account deficit would fall to 0.5 per cent of gross domestic product in fiscal 1996-97 from an estimated 2.9 per cent in 1992-93.

It said exports would need to grow by 15 per cent a year to shrink the deficit, and the government should pursue an export-oriented trade policy and exchange-rate regime.

It added that imports were likely to be marginally higher in the medium term than earlier estimated.

India's 1992 trade deficit was \$3.3 billion.

India received a \$2.3 billion loan from the IMF in 1991, when it stood on the brink of defaulting on its 74 billion foreign debt.

India is to begin talks in July with the IMF on a new medium term loan.

Russian privatisation vouchers exceed par value for first time

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's one-dollar privatisation vouchers have exceeded their nominal value for the first time on optimism over a decree President Boris Yeltsin issued last month to boost confidence in the vast state sell-off.

The vouchers were issued free in the latter part of 1992 to 150 million Russians to be swapped for shares in state firms.

Russian bankers said the vouchers were traded at 11,500 roubles after hovering below 5,000 so far this year. They have a face value of 10,000 roubles.

"Prices have been firming because of recent government measures to support the voucher scheme. The government must continue to encourage investors," said Valery Lazutkin, finance

director of the Moscow brokerage house C.A. and Company Ltd.

The mini-boom followed Mr. Yeltsin's May 8 decree barring investment funds — main players in vouchers — from selling privatisation cheques for cash in a bid to support prices.

About 400 investment funds have sprung up in Russia this year but they have been accused by many brokers of depressing prices by dumping large amounts of vouchers on the market.

"The ban against investment funds is rather strong, but the situation was getting out of hand. The funds were just speculating on the market," said Maxim Boiko, adviser to Deputy Prime Minister Anatoly Chubais in

charge of privatisations.

"The new decree sends a clear signal to speculators."

Mr. Boiko said the state Committee for State Property Management in charge of privatisations would act as a capital markets watchdog until the formation of a Russian securities and exchange commission, also decreed in May.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree makes sell-offs compulsory at public catering and consumer services sectors ahead of an Aug. 1 deadline and threatens with dismissal factor managers who fail to transform their enterprises into joint stock firms by June 11.

It authorises local state property committees to go ahead with sell-offs if companies fail to do so

on their own.

A minimum 29 per cent stake in enterprises slated for privatisation must be sold at voucher auctions within three months of turning the firm into a joint stock company, the decree states.

Mr. Boiko said trading volume on the Russian Commodities Exchange in Moscow soared to an all-time high of 184,000 vouchers in the last week of May against 52,000 the week before.

"In the first three days of June, the number of vouchers traded on the exchange has already reached 116,000. We're heading for new all-time highs," he said.

Mr. Boiko said the increased demand came mainly from brokerage houses, which he said numbered hundreds.

Germany sees worst decline since 1968

BONN (R) — West Germany's economy shrank by more than three per cent in the first quarter of 1993 from a year earlier, its sharpest decline since 1968. The Federal Statistics office has said.

Economics Minister Guenter Rexrodt said the figures confirmed that the recession could develop into the worst slump in three decades, but some private economists pointed to other signs that an end to the slide was in sight.

Gross domestic product (GDP) fell 1.5 per cent in the first quarter from the fourth quarter of 1992 and gross national product (GNP) fell two per cent.

Compared to the same period a year earlier, GDP fell 3.2 per cent and GNP fell 3.7 per cent.

"This is the sharpest decline in GNP in real terms since quarterly data were first published in 1968," the statistics office said.

The decline in GDP was the worst since the first quarter of 1975, when it fell 3.5 per cent.

The data, showing the fourth consecutive quarterly decline in west German GDP, revealed a sharp decrease in exports of 5.4 per cent from a year earlier and in imports of 6.3 per cent.

"Growth data from the Federal Statistics Office for the first quarter confirm... that the current recession in West Germany could become worse than those in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s," Mr. Rexrodt said in a statement.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY JUNE 7, 1993
By Thomas S. Plerson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Although recreation is still on your mind, leave some time open for an important business matter as well. You can make your life far more satisfying than it is now by channeling energies wisely.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Start the week right by doing whatever you have agreed for those who dwell beneath your roof and with any apparent block, it will soon pass so you are successful.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You find during the daytime that a new approach at vital communications requires your undivided attention; tonight you can go after personal aims.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Money matters are apt to demand a new system or activity so give your full attention and in the evening you will be able to go out on the town.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Change of an association with another is threatened unless you are more considerate of a partner but in the evening a new attitude comes into being.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Whatever you have in mind concerning your work load requires a new appraisal if you are to get fullest benefits from it, tonight do what pleases your lover.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Take some time out today to let others know your wishes were a good time at worthwhile recreations is concerned, tonight back up a powerful person.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 21) Sidelight both home and worldly confrontations and instead put your attention on how to impress a business person with your good common sense.

SCORPIO: (October 22 to November 21) Promises you have made to do for others can be the making of today's action and make sure you do nothing financially to endanger your security.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You can have some very happy moments today but make sure that you consider and agree to the cost before engaging in them, then tonight visit companion.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) In a family problem, talking with an advisor in confidence and following this advice can solve this issue, then study your financial position.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your own judgment and views are pretty accurate now and you would be wise to let a companion in trouble know just what you think should be done.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

"Last night we tried country line dancing. Stanley accidentally kicked himself 17 times."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By Henry Arnold

Unscramble these four jumbles, or better to each square, to form four adjacent words.

NAHVE
IDEPT
DRENCE
YULOHN

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: UPPER TROTH BIGAMY IMPUGN
Answer: What he did when he ran into his pal — PL — THE BITE ON HIM

Peanuts

Andy Capp

Mutt'n'Jeff

THE Daily Crossword by Diane C. Baldwin

ACROSS

- Out of litter
- Handy
- Antidotes
- Serious
- Companion of
- Portly
- Kuwait
- Top
- Below par
- Mortar's mate
- Free-for-
- Battlement hue
- Kickback of a
- land
- Shut light
- No No
- Wed on the sky
- Candid
- Traffic sign
- Middle
- Tropical tuber
- Kind of club
- Western
- CIA precursor
- Bound
- Omiters
- Daring
- Cartoon of music
- Penny follower
- Loyal subjects
- Bottom
- Spre
- 58 — truly
- Emphasize
- Prindles
- Preposition of
- old
- Bureau, abbr
- Down
- Circulars
- Clay
- Line site
- Baby's toy
- Kind of alcohol
- City of triumph
- Impudent
- Cloud
- demonstrandum
- Prize piece
- Prolicious
- Opera voice
- Exalts
- Genuine
- 23 Minnes
- Right-hand page
- Logan and
- Fitzgerald
- Swine
- Lessa
- 28 Andrew's concern
- 29 Aver
- 30 "bad" author
- 31 Minnes
- 33 Looked
- 34 Clutch
- 35 With distress
- 37 Machine for following out
- 42 Mary — Lincoln
- 43 Certain musical passage
- 44 River sides
- 45 Wary
- 46 Mr. Guthrie
- 47 Way
- 48 Age tobacco
- 50 Jubilant
- 51 Architectural feature
- 52 Impermanent person
- 54 Chit letters
- 55 Slick
- 56 Banned pesticide

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

PAID GRATE PIA
ALICE LABEL NEW
WONDERFUL ALOE
HARDY HALLS ATOM
ERAT TRINE RAPD
SAL ESTER BRID

Egypt inflation edges up to 12.8%

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian urban annual inflation rate edged up to 12.8 per cent in March from 9.3 per cent at the start of the year according to government figures.

Inflation hit a high of 26.1 per cent early in 1992 as Egypt started to implement economic reforms but dropped to below 10 per cent in June and stayed there for the rest of the year.

Western economists say inflation hits many of Egypt's poor much harder because they rely on fixed government salaries and subsidies on basic goods which

the government is removing under the reforms, backed by the International Monetary Fund.

A Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics report showed the costs of rent, water use and domestic fuel had gone up by 22.0 per cent in the year to March and public transport rose 34.5 per cent.

Meats and poultry rose by 15.7 per cent and 21.8 per cent respectively while edible oils shot up by 54.9 per cent.

Government economists say the diet of poor Egyptians has come to depend even more on bread in the past two years as subsidies on staples like rice and macaroni have been removed.

Egypt spends nearly \$1 billion importing wheat to make the heavily subsidised bread each year and Prime Minister Atef Sedki announced that the government had no plans to raise the price, currently about 1.5 cents per loaf.

Saudi shipping firm announces major expansion projects

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A Saudi shipping company, one of the largest in the world, has embarked on major projects to boost its fleet and transport crude oil and gas for the first time.

The National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia (NSCSA) said the projects were outlined in a 1992-1996 development plan triggered by record profits in 1991 because of the Gulf war.

In its annual report, the company said some of the projects had been completed and studies were underway for the remaining ventures.

"Among the priorities of the development plan is the strategic project to boost the transport capacity of the general cargo fleet, which includes buying new container ships," said the report.

"Other strategic projects underway involves the transport of crude oil, refined oil and gas, for which studies have been updated given the strong changes in the supply and demand on the world market," it added.

The Riyadh-based NSCSA currently operates 26 ships, of which 16 vessels are used to transport petrochemicals, among the main exports of Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich Gulf states.

It is the world's fifth largest firm in petrochemical shipping. In 1991, the company made a record net profit of 515 million (Sriyals (\$137 million), attributed to its transport services to the nearly 700,000 troops in the anti-Iraq coalition.

Its 1992 profits stood at 203 million riyals (\$54 million).

The Saudi government owns around 29 per cent of the company's capital of two billion riyals (\$33 million), while the rest is subscribed by local institutions and individuals.

"NSCSA is also planning to expand its regular shipping lines and open new lines seek new shipping agents, and carry out a project to store and repair containers with the aim of diversifying its income sources," the report said.

It said the company was servicing 45 ports after the opening of a line to China, the first direct link between southern China and international ports.

The company also reported a sharp growth in its financial position.

Kuwait plans to halve 93/94 budget deficit

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait expects to raise oil revenues by a fifth and cut the budget deficit by almost a half in fiscal year 1993/94 starting on July 1, according to budget proposals published Saturday.

The proposals put total government income at 2.71 billion dinars (\$8.9 billion) and expenditure at 3.9 billion dinars (\$12.8 billion), leaving a deficit of 1.18 billion dinars (\$3.8 billion), the official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported.

That compares with planned spending of 4.22 billion dinars (\$13.9 billion), planned income of 2.217 billion (\$7.3 billion) and a notional deficit of two billion

dinars (\$6.6 billion) in 1992/93. Projected spending is a seven per cent fall from the 4.2 billion dinars (\$13.9 billion) seen in 1992/93 budget plans.

Opposition deputies have called for belt tightening on major infrastructure and defence projects to further reduce a budget deficit swollen by Gulf war-related costs.

But parliamentarians are also under pressure from constituents to ensure government jobs for all Kuwaitis and generous handouts for anyone with a grievance.

The budget proposals, sent to parliament for debate by Prime Minister Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, put oil revenue at 2.4 billion dinars (\$7.9 billion), up 20 per cent from 2.0 billion (\$6.6 billion) in 1992/93, KUNA reported.

KUNA said the government planned a 22 per cent rise to 271 million dinars (\$894 million) in allocations to the Fund for Future Generations — Kuwait's protection against the day its oil runs out — from 221.8 million dinars (\$732 million) in 1992/93.

By law 10 per cent of revenue goes to the fund, which comprises most of the emirate's overseas assets.

The assets, once valued at up to \$100 billion, have been run down by costs related to the 1991 conflict in which a U.S.-led alliance liberated the emirate from Iraqi occupation. Some market estimates put the current value at between \$15 billion and \$35 billion.

Finance Minister Nasser Abdullah Al Rodhan has said the deficit will be financed primarily by internal and external borrow-

ing rather than liquidation of assets.

Meanwhile, official figures showed that rising oil revenues slashed Kuwait's trade deficit to 234 million dinars (\$768 million) in 1992, a 78 per cent drop from 1.1 billion dinars (\$3.6 billion) in 1991.

The value of oil exports rose to 1.82 billion dinars (\$6.01 billion) in calendar 1992 from 248 million (\$818 million) in 1991, a central bank quarterly statistical bulletin said.

Oil production and revenue have been rising steadily as oil installations damaged during the 1991 Gulf war are repaired. Oil sales account for more than 90 per cent of foreign earnings.

The trade balance ballooned into deficit in 1991 as the country spent heavily on imported materials needed for reconstruction following Iraq's seven-month occupation and the six-week war that ended it.

In the third quarter of 1992 the trade balance moved into surplus for the first time since the conflict.

Increasing oil exports contributed to a 65 per cent rise in the quarterly trade surplus to 182.9 million dinars (\$603 million) in the fourth quarter of 1992 from 111 million (\$366 million) in the third quarter, the bank said.

Oil export revenues rose 30 per cent to 674 million dinars (\$2.2 billion) in the last quarter of 1992 from 520 million dinars (\$1.7 billion) in the third quarter.

Non-oil export revenues fell 3.5 per cent to 43.5 million dinars (\$143 million) in the last quarter of 1992 from 45.1 million dinars (\$148 million) in the third-

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COMPANY'S NAME	TRADED VOLUME	OFFER	OPENING	CLOSING	PRICE
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	39,680	182,000	182,000	182,000	5.480
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	108,818	8,470	8,500	8,500	5.480
BANK OF JORDAN	915	29,400	30,500	30,500	20.500
WILSON INVESTMENT BANK	34,440	2,000	2,000	2,000	20.040
JORDAN DEVELOPMENT BANK	30,512	2,050	2,050	2,050	20.040
JORDAN COMMERCIAL BANK	26,050	2,000	2,000	2,000	20.040
JORDAN BANK FOR SAVINGS & INVESTMENT	92,870	4,210	4,500	4,500	4.820
JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	130,433	2,900	2,900	2,900	2.900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	13,850	2,100	2,100	2,100	2.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	8,700	4,350	4,350	4,350	4.350
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,913	3,450	3,450	3,450	3.450
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17,240	4,500	4,500	4,500	4.500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	61,240	2,160	2,160	2,160	2.160
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18,610	4,100	4,100	4,100	4.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12,570	3,900	3,900	3,900	3.900
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,775	3,380	3,380	3,380	3.380
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	915	3,000	3,000	3,000	3.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,416	2,850	2,850	2,850	2.850
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	327,842	2,160	2,160	2,160	2.160
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	30,407	1,280	1,280	1,280	1.280
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,352	0,630	0,630	0,630	0.630
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	52,144	4,230	4,230	4,230	4.230
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	26,050	2,100	2,100	2,100	2.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	158,372	0,870	0,870	0,870	0.870
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,920	1,300	1,300	1,300	1.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	4,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	316,078	2,760	2,810	2,810	2.810
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	368	38,000	34,750	34,750	34.750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	187,243	10,750	10,750	10,750	10.750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	110,745	7,820	7,820	7,820	7.820
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	188,744	10,650	11,950	11,950	11.950
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,971,329	2,100	2,100	2,100	2.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	75,403	0,850	0,850	0,850	0.850
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,971,329	4,300	4,300	4,300	4.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	12,518	3,630	3,630	3,630	3.630
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	25,550	3,100	3,000	3,000	3.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	11,850	21,500	21,500	21,500	21.500
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	8,219	1,170	1,160	1,170	1.170
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	2,332	0,630	0,630	0,630	0.630
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,719	3,800	3,800	3,800	3.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	38,854	3,300	3,300	3,300	3.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	198,374	10,450	10,550	10,550	10.550
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18,920	1,210	1,210	1,210	1.210
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,438	5,760	5,750	5,750	5.750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	68,912	4,300	4,300	4,300	4.300
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,925	6,200	6,200	6,200	6.200
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,719	3,800	3,800	3,800	3.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	55,200	9,600	9,600	9,600	9.600
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,225	4,800	4,800	4,800	4.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	1,200	10,000	10,000	10,000	10.000
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	136,965	0,570	0,560	0,540	0.540
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	14,719	3,800	3,800	3,800	3.800
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	18,973	7,750	7,750	7,750	7.750
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	53,119	4,230	4,230	4,230	4.230
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	6,527	1,860	1,860	1,860	1.860
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	13,073	3,120	3,200	3,180	3.180
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	93,977	5,580	5,580	5,580	5.580
GRAND TOTAL	4,992,173				

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 67360
TRADED VOLUME IN THE PARALLEL MARKET: 1.30 125930

New Maghreb bank to open in Tunis early next year

TUNIS (R) — A foreign trade bank planned by the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) is to open early in 1994 and its head office will be in Tunis, Tunisia's foreign affairs minister has said. The Maghreb Investment and Foreign Trade Bank will hold its constituent assembly in November this year and open early 1994, Habib Ben Yahia told the parliament during a debate on the AMU. Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Mauritania decided to create the bank at a 1991 AMU summit with the aim of funding joint agricultural and industrial projects, encouraging investment and developing trade among member states. As of Jan. 1993, only Tunisia, Algeria and Libya had ratified the agreement, but Mr. Ben Yahia said Morocco and Mauritania were expected to join them before next September. The new bank was planned to have capital of \$500 million shared equally among the five member states. But experts told Reuters they expected them to subscribe only \$7.5 billion each for the launch.

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Foreign Exchange Market Summary (June 1 - June 4, 1993)

AMMAN — The U.S. unit was firm against all other major currencies last week. It ended the week 2.39 per cent higher against the mark, 3.34 per cent higher against sterling and 0.72 per cent against the yen.

After the Memorial Day holiday in New York Monday, the dollar moved higher against European currencies Tuesday, but remained unchanged against the mark. Its rally appeared to reflect better economic news and renewed concerns about European recession. The dollar's rise was attributed to some U.S. economic numbers released by the previous week, which indicated some improvement.

Wednesday, the dollar continued to rise against European currencies, but remained unchanged against the yen compared to the previous day, in response to better than expected U.S. New Home Sale figures.

The dollar traded in narrow ranges Thursday compared to the previous day, but it was slightly firmer against other major currencies.

Friday, however, the dollar moved sharply higher against all other major currencies, in view of better than expected U.S. May employment data. The dollar, thus ended at 1.6264 marks and 107.73 yen, whereas sterling ended at \$1.5090, its highest for the week.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	28/5/1993	4/6/1993	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.5612	1.5090	(3.34)%
Deutsche Mark	1.5875	1.6264	(2.39)%
Swiss Franc	1.4182	1.4644	(3.15)%
French Franc	5.3538	5.4785	(2.28)%
Japanese Yen	106.95	107.30	(0.72)%

1SD Per 100

Euro-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	3.06	3.75	3.00	3.81
Sterling Pound	5.81	6.00	5.78	5.81
Deutsche Mark	7.87	6.75	7.62	6.63
Swiss Franc	4.93	4.65	5.02	4.68
French Franc	7.81	6.81	7.77	6.81
Japanese Yen	3.21	3.43	3.21	3.34

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 6/6/1993

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6860	0.6880
Sterling Pound	1.0339	1.0391
Deutsche Mark	0.4203	0.4224
Swiss Franc	0.4681	0.4704
French Franc	0.1251	0.1257
Japanese Yen	0.6358	0.6390
Dutch Guilder	0.3756	0.3775
Swedish Krona	0.0937	0.0942
Italian Lira	0.0463	0.0465
Belgian Franc	0.02113	0.02124

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U.N. relief airlift resumes as fighting continues in Bosnia

SARAJEVO (R) — The United Nations resumed its humanitarian aid airlift to Sarajevo Sunday after a four-day interruption, and a huge convoy of 500 relief trucks was bound for the hard-pressed Muslim of Tuzla.

But the Muslim, Serb and Croat belligerents in Bosnia's 14-month-old ethnic civil war battled in central, eastern and northern parts of the shattered ex-Yugoslav republic.

Complicating peace efforts, Serbs in the neighbouring Serb-ruled territory of Krajina in Croatia also called a referendum to unify their rebel state with Serb-ruled lands in Bosnia.

The plan for a referendum on June 19-20 leaves open the possibility of merging eventually with Croatia proper, the main component of rump Yugoslavia.

The Serb Krajina assembly took the decision Saturday at a meeting in the Serb-controlled Krajina town of Petrinja.

The assembly decided to meet in Knin, the enclave's and said a joint constituent assembly of a new united Serb state would be held on June 28, when a "head of state" would be elected.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) resumed its Sarajevo airlift, which was suspended last Wednesday after a

U.S. aircraft was fired on. A Canadian aircraft from Ancona in Italy was the first plane to land Sunday morning.

A spokesman for the UNHCR office in Sarajevo told Reuters other aircraft would be arriving from Ancona and from Split and Zagreb in Croatia. "We're back to full on," the official said.

The airlift is vital for the Bosnian capital, which has been under Serb siege for the past 14 months.

A "salvation convoy" of 500 aid trucks organised by the Bosnians themselves is driving across the republic towards the northern town of Tuzla, U.N. officials said Saturday.

Local authorities in Tuzla, a Muslim town swelled by thousands of civil war refugees, organised the relief action, U.N. spokesman Commander Barry Frewer said.

Tuzla is one of six Serb-besieged districts declared "safe areas" by the United Nations, which voted Friday to send 5,000 additional troops to help to protect the havens.

Serb forces are pressing on with an offensive against the besieged Muslim enclave of Gorazde in eastern Bosnia, attacking civilian targets,

Muslim-run Sarajevo Radio said Sunday.

The Serb assault on Gorazde another of the six Muslim enclaves designated as safe areas, continued with several infantry attacks on all defence lines Saturday and shells hitting a number of civilian targets, the radio said.

Serb forces have prevented U.N. military observers from entering Gorazde so far to assess the situation.

From central Bosnia, Reuters correspondent John Fullerton reported that Croats and Muslims skirmished around the towns of Travnik and Vitez Sunday, using rockets, heavy mortars and artillery.

U.N. military sources said a ceasefire agreed Saturday in Travnik still held in most parts but multiple-barrelled rocket launchers, anti-aircraft guns and mortars could clearly be heard slamming into outlying areas.

Croat forces opened up with 120 mm mortars and a single 152 mm gun — known by peacekeepers as "Nora" — on Muslim-held parts of Vitez from about 5 a.m. (0300 GMT).

A 40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft gun used tracer to pinpoint Muslim houses on a ridge above a British U.N. peacekeepers' base,

and machinegun fire and heavy mortar rounds followed.

The eastern Bosnian Muslim town of Srebrenica was also reported to be tense Saturday, U.N. military sources said, and 16 artillery rounds crashed into the Muslim-held Bihac area in the northwest of Bosnia.

The Bosnian capital Sarajevo was relatively quiet.

Bosnian Serbs meanwhile blamed Muslims for a massacre last week when 11 people were killed and 100 wounded in a mortar bomb attack against a soccer game in a Muslim area of Sarajevo.

They said the Muslims staged the attack to incriminate the Serbs and put pressure on the U.N. Security Council on the eve of the Council vote on safe areas.

Meanwhile, French President Francois Mitterrand has written to his Serbian counterpart Slobodan Milosevic demanding the release of jailed opposition leader Vuk Draskovic, has office said Sunday.

The letter, sent Saturday after Mr. Draskovic was beaten up, arrested and charged with treason, warned Serbia it could not come out of international isolation if it abused basic human rights such as liberty of expression.



New Guatemalan President Ramiro de Leon Carpio (left) takes the oath of office early Sunday from the leader of the Congress Jose Lebo Dubon (AFP photo).

Congress elects top human rights official as Guatemalan president

GUATEMALA CITY (R) — Guatemala's top human rights official took over as president early Sunday and pledged to rebuild democracy, five days after the army deposed President Jorge Serrano in a bloodless palace coup.

President Ramiro de Leon Carpio, sworn into office a few hours after congress elected him president to replace Mr. Serrano, pleaded for national unity but faced a delicate relationship with Guatemala's powerful armed forces.

Mr. De Leon took office following 12 days of turmoil sparked when Mr. Serrano, claiming he was fighting corruption and the drug trade, seized near-dictatorial powers on May 25. The army overthrew him barely a week later.

"I am calling at this historic moment for national unity, without revenge or vengeance," Mr. De Leon said in an inaugural speech.

He was chosen president in the second round of voting by a special session of the unicameral Congress.

Mr. De Leon has been the Congress-appointed human rights ombudsman for three years, a post in which he became one of the country's most prominent defenders of human rights.

He often accused the army of committing atrocities against civilians in its 30-year war on leftist guerrillas.

While political leaders hope Mr. De Leon's election will bring order to the turbulent Central American nation, the big question surrounding his presidency will be his relations with the military.

He did not mention the army in his 20-minute inaugural speech but stressed his "life-long commitment to democracy and full respect of human rights."

Despite improvements in recent years, Guatemala still has one of the worst human rights records in Latin America.

Rumours of an imminent military takeover have swept the Guatemalan capital for two weeks but Mr. De Leon earlier Saturday discounted fears that his election would provoke hostility, or worse, from army chiefs.

"They have made it clear that they will not be antagonistic towards me," he told reporters.

"The controversy we have had has been due to the nature of my work."

He praised the army's intervention to force Mr. Serrano from power Tuesday with the support of an extraordinary coalition of business, trade union.

"The army's behaviour throughout the crisis has been correct," he said.

But sources close to the military say the army's top brass is divided and fear any effort to remove officers who backed Mr. Serrano could draw a violent reaction.

Defence Minister General Jose Garcia Samayoa at first backed Mr. Serrano's "self-coup" but then withdrew his support as pressure mounted at home and abroad. The United States, Spain and other countries cut off aid in protest at Mr. Serrano's move.

Since Mr. Serrano's overthrow, army leaders have been anxious to distance themselves from political power struggles that have paralysed Guatemala.

Spain votes in closest-ever election

MADRID (R) — Spaniards voted Sunday in the closest general election in Spain's 16 years of democracy, with the ruling Socialists and opposition conservatives neck and neck in opinion polls.

More than 30 million people gave the right to vote in the fifth general election since the death of dictator General Francisco Franco in 1975.

The Socialist Worker's Party (SOP) of Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez won the last three elections, to the 350-seat Congress (lower House) with ease, though losing its absolute majority by one seat in 1989.

But economic recession, driving unemployment up to nearly 15 per cent, and financial scandals have undermined Socialist support and given the centred Popular Party (PP), led by Jose Maria Aznar, its best chance of a decade of taking power.

Two weeks of formal campaigning and more than a month

of intense electioneering before had left the PSOE and PP virtually level in popular support, but with more than three million voters apparently still undecided.

If neither major party wins a working majority, they will be forced to seek parliamentary agreements with regional groups in efforts to form a government.

Polls opened at 0700 GMT and radio reports indicated the early turnout was heavy.

Mr. Gonzalez, 51, virtually synonymous with Spanish democracy after nearly 11 years in government, was one of the first to cast his ballot in his Madrid constituency.

Accompanied by his wife Carmen Romero, a PSOE candidate for the Andalusian part of Cadiz, a smiling Mr. Gonzalez avoided efforts by a crush of reporters to get him to comment on the outcome of the poll and simply urged Spaniards to vote in large numbers.

Mr. Aznar, a 40-year-old lawyer who has pushed the PP

towards the political centre and won much support among the young, voted in another Madrid district with his wife Ana Botella.

He told reporters he was confident of a PP victory, adding: "I hope this will be a great day for democracy and a great day for participation."

Mr. Aznar based his campaign on relentless attacks on the government's economic policy and its hesitant response to persistent charges of corruption, notably an accusation of illegal party funding in the 1980s.

Branding the Socialists the party of unemployment, failure and corruption, he proclaimed the PP to be a new force for change to unite all Spaniards.

Mr. Gonzalez emphasised the gaudy tricks made by Spain in modernisation, social welfare and integration with Europe and the outside world in his decade of government. He asked for support to overcome the economic crisis and continue on the path of progress.

Sihanouk rules out government before October

PHNOM PENH (R) — Acting on the advice of royal astrologers, Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk said Sunday he would not attempt to form a new government until his birthday next October.

"Astrologers have advised me not to pressure for a new government because I won't succeed until my birthday next Oct. 30," the head of state told a crowd of 5,000 gathered outside the royal palace in Phnom Penh.

Smiling and joking with "his children", Prince Sihanouk said the Royalist FUNCINPEC Party led by his son Prince Norodom Ranariddh was continuing to insist on holding the balance of power in a new government following last month's U.N.-run elections.

"For the time being we'll leave each political party to remain in their area," he said.

FUNCINPEC secured a modest victory in the May 23-28 polls over its bitter rival, the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), the political wing of the Hanoi-installed Phnom Penh government.

Last Thursday afternoon, Prince Sihanouk stunned the United Nations and the diplomatic community here by declaring the formation of a bipartite government with himself as prime minister and Prince Ranariddh and Phnom Penh Premier Hun Sen as deputies.

The proposal was rejected by the Royalists who charged that Prince Sihanouk's initiative ran contrary to the U.N.-sponsored 1991 Paris peace agreement and did not reflect the outcome of the election.

Prince Sihanouk announced the dissolution of the plan the next morning.

But some Cambodians felt the idea offered the only chance of achieving a lasting peace for their war-weary country.

6 dead as ship runs aground off New York

NEW YORK (AP) — About 200 illegal Asian immigrants jumped ship after their freighter ran aground on a sandbar just off the New York City coast early Sunday, authorities said.

Six people died and at least 18 were seriously injured after being pulled from the chilly Atlantic Ocean by authorities or making their own way to shore through two-metre surf. Many suffered hypothermia and at least two had cardiac arrests.

The other passengers who jumped were treated by paramedics on the Rockaway Peninsula beach, about 300 metres from where the ship ran aground.

About 100 people remained on board, said Sergeant John McCloskey, a police spokesman.

Two people from the ship were pronounced dead at the scene, said emergency medical service spokesman Charles Degatano.

The exact cause of the deaths was not immediately known.

Police spokesman Lieutenant Raymond O'Donnell said all the ship's passengers were illegal aliens. The ship's origin was not immediately known.

Officials from the Immigration and Naturalisation service were at the scene handcuffing and leading away some of the passengers, who were mostly young

men, and tagging others.

"Whether they were aboard the freighter to work or were planning on jumping off when they got here, I don't know," said Fire Department spokesman Jerry Sanford.

"Most of them were carrying belongings in little plastic bags with them," he added.

The 45-metre freighter ran aground at 2 a.m. (0600 GMT) in two metres of water, about 300 metres off Jacob Riis Park in the borough of Queens, at 2 a.m. (0600 GMT), police said.

Hundreds of rescuers and law-enforcement officials were at the scene early Sunday

Turnout is high in Latvia's elections

IGA, Latvia (R) — Latvia's first post-Soviet parliamentary elections showed a brisk turnout is weekend with 45.5 per cent of the electorate voting on the day, the Parliament Press Centre said Sunday.

A large minority of Russian voters from 50 years of Soviet rule has not been granted citizenship or the right to vote in June 5-6 poll. Prompting negotiations by Moscow that the Baltic state is preparing a basis for ethnic cleansing.

A Parliament Press Centre spokesman said no figures indicating levels of support for the parties contesting the election had yet been released.

She was unable to confirm figures published by the Baltfax news Agency showing a majority Latvians who had cast their vote abroad had backed two strongly nationalist parties rather than the pre-election favourite, Latvian Way.

Baltfax said unofficial information showed 25 per cent of voters

abroad had chosen the Latvian National Independence Movement, whose main candidate is a German-speaking emigre, Joahims Zigerists.

It said 20 per cent chose Fatherland and Freedom, a radical nationalist movement which wants to "decolonise" Latvia by forcibly repatriating Russians.

Latvian Way, a pragmatic alliance of former Communist leaders and anti-Communist emigres, was trailing with 17 per cent, Baltfax said. The moderate-right-wing Peasants' Union and Christian Democrats had 13 and 10 per cent respectively.

Other parties had so far failed to pass the four per cent barrier needed for a seat in the 100-member parliament.

While the elections give Latvian citizens their first heady taste of people power, they are galling for the country's large minority of Soviet-era Russian settlers.

Nearly a million Russians who

settled here during five decades of Soviet rule have not been granted Latvian citizenship.

Under strict new regulations, only 300,000 Russians living here have the automatic right to citizenship and the vote. They or their forebears lived in Latvia before 1940, when the tiny Baltic state was taken over by the Soviet Union after a secret agreement between Moscow and Berlin.

The rest, who came after Latvia's 1940 annexation by Moscow, can apply for naturalisation only after the election.

Since the president government has left key decisions to its successor — including a final decision on how many non-Latvians can become citizens, as well as privatisation — the Russians will have few spokesmen in future debate on these issues.

Many Latvians, who make up 52 per cent of the 2.7 million population but want to revive their language and culture, believe it is vital to keep most votes in their own hands.

Venezuela interim president sworn in

CARACAS (R) — A veteran senator Saturday became Venezuela's interim president replacing suspended President Carlos Andres, who is charged with corruption in a nation gripped by political, economic and social turmoil.

Ramon Jose Velasquez, 76, was sworn in as interim president after congressmen decided in a vote earlier that he was the best candidate to guide this oil-exporting nation through its most difficult crisis in 35 years of democracy to December elections.

He began to consider economic policy and cabinet changes and called for "solidarity" in a nation convulsed by two coup attempts

last year. A host of violent protests and political opportunism in moments of crisis.

"It will not be a government that creates miracles but I will do everything in my reach to resolve the complaints of Venezuelans," Mr. Velasquez told Congress after being sworn in.

"The country cannot continue living from shock to shock. The people cannot be submitted to an interminable extension of a recurring crisis. I invite different sectors to return to a spirit of solidarity that has been dampened by threats, rumours and dramatic events."

The independent senator replaces Mr. Perez, who was suspended from his duties two weeks ago and sent to trial on charges of

embezzlement and misuse of public funds in a currency exchange transaction.

Mr. Perez, who has survived two coup attempts and a host of riots and other leadership challenges, denies the charges.

Velasquez will rule Venezuela until the government's mandate ends next February or unless Mr. Perez is acquitted.

The septuagenarian senator, who has half a century experience as a lawmaker, historian and journalist, later met the cabinet.

He was scheduled to be briefed by ministers on shrinking state coffers and on the weakening of an economy which officials acknowledge has been too dependent on oil.

Berlin AIDS conference hopes to move world closer to cure

BERLIN (R) — Still years away from a cure for AIDS, up to 100 leading world scientists gathered this week in Berlin for the largest AIDS conference ever held.

Exchanging information they hope might move the world closer to an antidote for the disease that is 100,000 each year, researchers from 166 countries will take part in seminars and present papers. The delegates include some of the world's leading experts on AIDS.

The ninth international conference on AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) will be officially opened Monday by German President Richard von Weizsäcker.

"We want riveting discussions, not itinerant preachers and as little hocus-pocus as possible," conference Chairman Karl-Otto Lohmeyer said in an interview with Reuters.

Last year's conference in Amsterdam was overshadowed by a fire — later repudiated — of an emergence of a new strain of HIV virus that causes AIDS.

"We have to be extremely cautious about anyone going public with a claim that they have just discovered a vaccine," Mr. Lohmeyer said. "These come

from charlatans and there is often nothing to back up their claims."

AIDS destroys the body's immune system, leaving it exposed to other infections. It is triggered by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

More than 14 million have been infected by the virus, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said recently. The number of people dying each year will quadruple to an estimated 400,000 by the year 2000, one research organisation forecast.

Most of the conference delegates are scientists and AIDS researchers but some of those attending are themselves HIV positive, officials said.

Special facilities have been set up where HIV positive delegates can rest and take medication. Officials said they were not counting their number but about 400 people infected with HIV took part last year in Amsterdam.

The United States will have the largest group of delegates with about 2,500, followed by Germany with just under 2,000.

Mr. Habermehl, who is also the director of the Institute for Clinical and Experimental Virology at Berlin's Free University, said tremendous progress has been made in the last decade toward developing an antidote to

AIDS, but said it was impossible to predict when a breakthrough cure would come.

"You have to be honest and admit what you don't know," he said, calling predictions of an imminent breakthrough cure "futile guesswork."

The one certainty is this — AIDS will definitely be a lasting problem for the next one or two generations and it will gain in significance," he said.

Some of the other key issues to be discussed include:

- How does HIV cause AIDS?
- What can be done to slow the sharp rise in the number of women, children and adolescents infected? Some 40 per cent of 13 million HIV-infected adults today are women, against only 25 per cent three years ago.
- How can the spread of AIDS in the Third World and in Eastern Europe be combatted? To help 2,000 Third World delegates attend. The conference arranged financial assistance of nearly three million marks (\$1.85 million).
- How successful have prevention programmes and early treatment of HIV infected people been in slowing the spread of AIDS?

Clinton looks to pull momentum out of chaos

WASHINGTON (R) — Bill Clinton looks likely to try to restore momentum to his battered presidency this week by putting the focus back on the U.S. economy and possibly picking a moderate nominee for the Supreme Court.

Mr. Clinton and the White House are looking for a breather from a state of chaos most recently demonstrated by the crisis over the president's withdrawal of black law professor Lani Guinier as his assistant attorney general for civil rights.

There was optimism among many White House officials that the Guinier controversy would die quickly, and that the appointment of David Gergen as co-counsel to the president would help Mr. Clinton regain his political equilibrium.

"We're turning the corner," one Clinton aide said.

Mr. Gergen, who served three Republican presidents, starts work officially Monday.

He will have his work cut out to turn around the fortunes of a president whose 36 per cent approval rating is the lowest of any president at this stage of his

administration.

Mr. Clinton's proposed budget, having barely squeaked through the House of Representatives, faces a tough fight in the Senate when senators begin considering it this week. Mr. Clinton has signalled he will be willing to compromise on a proposed energy tax and on more spending cuts.

He is expected very soon to nominate his choice to fill a seat on the Supreme Court being vacated by retiring Justice Byron White. Two moderates, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt and Boston Appeals Court Judge Stephen Breyer, are said to be on the short list.

Mr. Clinton aides and allies hope solid progress on these two issues will help the public forget about the embarrassment over Ms. Guinier and other controversies.

Al From, president of the centrist Democratic Leadership Council that Mr. Clinton founded, said dropping Ms. Guinier was a critical decision for getting Mr. Clinton's presidency back on track because it proved Mr. Clin-

ton has core beliefs, and it spared the country a fight it didn't need.

Mr. Clinton withdrew the candidacy of Ms. Guinier, saying he could not defend her intellectual writings that covered ways to grant more political power to minorities. Conservatives rallied against her, saying they found her writings extreme to the point of being anti-democratic.

The pain and anguish that Mr. Clinton endured over the decision to withdraw the nomination of a friend of 20 years was written on his face when he announced it at a news conference Thursday night.

"It was the hardest decision I've had to make since I became president," Mr. Clinton said later, according to veteran New York Times reporter R.W. Apple, one of several people who had dinner with the president after he announced his decision.

"I really don't think what's in her articles matches what I stand for," he said.

Some in the White House felt he was right, because it would be just one more battle to endure. Others said privately they felt he

should have made a stand and fought for the nomination to show he has backbone.

Mr. From said it was important now for Mr. Clinton to move his economic plans forward in the next two weeks and make sure Congress goes along with a down payment on welfare reform to begin fulfilling some campaign promises.

"His presidency is in trouble, but I believe it can be quickly turned around with some success on some of the cornerstone ideas that he ran on," Mr. From said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Gergen, whose appointment angered some liberals because of his connection to the economic policies of Ronald Reagan, insists he is an independent now but said Mr. Clinton must reach out to Republicans to succeed.

"The question is whether Bill Clinton can pull together an administration and whether he can work with Republicans, which I think is important to do. To have a bipartisan administration, to reach out," Mr. Gergen said Friday.

Four-star hotel slipping... into the sea?

SCARBOROUGH, England (AP) — A four-star hotel known for its spectacular views of the sea was getting a close-up look following a big landslide. Two large chunks of the Victorian Holbeck Hall Hotel collapsed Saturday afternoon, shedding debris down the 150-foot (45-metre) slope created by the landslide across the beach below. The hotel's rose gardens, sun lounge and part of the restaurant fell earlier. The hotel's ornate entrance also has collapsed. "It's only a matter of time now before we lose the entire northeast wing on the seaward side," said Mike Clements, director of technical services with Scarborough Council. Officials said salvage work had been halted because the building was too dangerous. Sky Television reported that among the treasures still inside was a £20,000 (\$30,400) oil painting of a noblewoman. A Saturday wedding was postponed to a more stable venue, as hundreds of sightseers gathered to watch the collapse. Television news bulletins detailed each break-up. On Friday, guests at the £100 (\$153) per night hotel were awoken before breakfast and told to get ready to leave. When more of the yard began slipping, they were ordered out immediately. The guests were asked to settle their bills but they were not charged for breakfast, the Times reported.

Robber's rat threat brings 18-month jail term

EDINBURGH (R) — A youth who used his pet rat in a bid to rob an Edinburgh liquor store has been jailed for 18 months by a Scottish court. James Bryce, 18, took the rat from his pocket, held it to the face of manageress Katherine Haggart, and demanded the shop takings but fled when she refused to hand them over, Scottish newspapers reported.

Robber's corpse found in burgled house

CAPE TOWN (AP) — Two men broke into a house, drank most of the liquor, and then got into a brawl that left one of the burglars dead inside the home, police said. David Bradley discovered the man's hacked body inside the kitchen Friday when he went to check on the house for his brother, who was away on holiday. Police said they suspected two burglars got into a drunken brawl after breaking into the home in Villiersdorp outside Cape Town. The second burglar escaped with household goods and clothes.

Toho graduate wins Belgium's top music contest

RUSSELS (R) — Yoyoi Toda, a 25-year-old graduate of Tokyo's Toho Academy, won Belgium's prestigious Queen Elisabeth Violin Contest early Sunday after a gruelling month-long ascent through eliminatory contests. "It's like a dream," Toda, a self-described admirer of the late Russian violinist David Oistrakh, told reporters after the jury's decision was announced around 2 a.m. "I thought if it didn't work this time I would become a teacher rather than a soloist." Toda elicited praise from the jurors for her liquid, transparent sound in concertos by Sibelius and Janacek. The audience, however, merely clapped politely when her name was announced. It burst into delirious applause when the runner-up, 24-year-old Liviu Prunaru of Romania, was named. The Queen Elisabeth Contest, begun in 1937, alternates yearly between piano, violin, composition and singing. Previous laureates include violinist Leonid Kogan and pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Singer Mariah Carey marries the boss

NEW YORK (R) — Singer Mariah Carey married the boss — Sony Music President Thomas Motella — in a New York City ceremony attended by such singing stars and Barbara Streisand and Bruce Springsteen. Despite a steady rain, more than 300 guests attended the wedding. The 23-year-old bride said before her marriage to Motella, 43, that she wanted a "wedding every girl dreams about." If that included a star-studded guest list she got her wish. In addition to Streisand and Springsteen, guests included singer-songwriter Billy Joel and his wife, Model Christie Brinkley; Springsteen's wife, singer Patti Scialfa; singer Michael Bolton, actor Tony Danza, Dick Clark and record mogul David Geffen. After the ceremony, Carey appeared on the steps of the church with her new husband.

Belmont Stakes

Krone becomes first woman to win Triple Crown; Prairie Bayou destroyed

NEW YORK (AP) — Colonial Affair carried Julie Krone into the record books by winning the Belmont Stakes Saturday in a race marred by the breakdown of Preakness winner Prairie Bayou.

Colonial Affair took the lead in the upper stretch and made Krone the first woman jockey ever to win a U.S. thoroughbred Triple Crown race.

Prairie Bayou was humanely destroyed about a half hour after the race — the final leg of the Triple Crown, three weeks to the day after Union City was destroyed after breaking down in the Preakness.

Sea Hero, the Kentucky Derby winner, was in the hunt for a time, but finished out of the money.

The 29-year-old Krone guided Colonial Affair, who had not run in the Derby or Preakness over the 1 1/2 miles (2.4 kilometres) on a good track on a rainy day at Belmont Park in two minutes, 29.45 seconds. The winner finished 2 1/4 lengths ahead of Kissin Kris, who was 3 1/2 lengths in front of Wild Gale.

Silver of Silver was fourth in the 13-horse field, another two lengths back.

The crowd gasped when Smith appeared to be unseated, although a tape showed the jockey jumped off. Prairie Bayou, who was removed in a horse ambulance, had a broken his right foreleg. Smith walked off the track with the horse's trainer, Tom Bohannon.

In the Preakness at Pimlico May 15, Union City broke down on the backstretch after breaking his right front ankle and was destroyed.

Krone moved Colonial Affair into fourth place behind Cherokee Run, Silver of Silver and Wild Gale with a quarter mile (400 metres) to go. Then the colt charged down the middle of the stretch to make Krone part of racing lore.

An inquiry had been lodged against second-place Kissin Kris, but after looking at film stewards allowed the order of finish to stand.

Completing the order to finish after Silver of Silver were Virginia Rapids, Cherokee Run, Sea Hero, Bull in the Heather, Antrim Rd., Raglan Road, Only Alpha and Arinthod. Prairie Bayou did not finish.

El Bakan was scratched Saturday morning after developing a fever because of a liver infection.

Colonial Affair became the fifth 3-year-old in the last nine years to win the Belmont after not racing in the Derby and Preakness. A.P. Indy accomplished the feat last year.

Krone, the only woman ever to ride in the Belmont, had finished ninth on Subordinated Debt in 1991 and sixth on Colony Light in 1992.

Despite his seventh-place finish, Sea Hero apparently won a \$1 million bonus that goes to the horse with the most points in the three races, based on 10-5-3-1. He finished with 10 points.

Prairie Bayou had 15 points, but a horse must complete all three races to claim the bonus.

Barkley leads Suns into NBA finals

PHOENIX (R) — Charles Barkley turned in a monster performance in the seventh and deciding game of the Western Conference finals Saturday to lead the Phoenix Suns into the National Basketball Association championship series for the first time since 1976.

Barkley scored 44 points and pulled down 24 rebounds as the Suns soundly defeated the Seattle SuperSonics 123-110 to earn a showdown with the two-time defending NBA champion Chicago Bulls.

Chicago finished off the New York Knicks four games to two in the Eastern Conference finals Friday to keep alive their quest to become only the third team in NBA history to win three successive titles.

"I believe we are going to win the World Championship. 'I've believed that all year," said Barkley, who led the Suns to the best regular-season record in the league and was named the NBA's most valuable player.

"I feel we've got the best team in the world and I'm glad we're playing Chicago because they're the best," he said.

In the finals, which began in Phoenix Wednesday night, Barkley will come up against two of his Olympic dream team teammates in Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen.

The Suns will be going for their first NBA title, as will Barkley, who came to Phoenix in a trade last summer after eight seasons with Philadelphia.

Barkley, whose 44 points was a career playoff-high, hit 12-of-20 shots from the field and 19-of-22 from the free throw line as he drew after foul by bullying his way inside.

He scored 16 in the first half when the Suns built a 57-51 half-time advantage. Barkley then scored eight points to spark a 14-2 run that opened the third quarter and finished with 13 points in the period.



Suns' Charles Barkley (left) guards an opponent during NBA playoffs

Phoenix led by as many 19 points at 84-65 before the Sonics closed the quarter with a 15-7 run to pull back to 91-80.

Eddie Johnson, who led Seattle with 34 points on 12-of-17 shooting, scored 18 in the third quarter to keep the Sonics within striking distance.

But Barkley continued to control the game inside with physical strength and sheer determination and completed his brilliant performance with 15 points in the final quarter.

Phoenix started the fourth quarter with a 9-4 run that opened a 100-84 lead and Seattle pulled no closer than 11 points the rest of the way.

Kevin Johnson added 22 points for the Suns and Tom Chambers chipped in 17.

Phoenix hit 57 free throws in 64 attempts, a playoff record for a regulation game.

Sam Perkins scored 19 points and Shawn Kemp added 18 for Seattle, which was looking to advance to the NBA finals for the first time since 1979 when they beat the Washington Bullets for their only championship.

Werder Bremen grabs German title

BERLIN (AP) — Bernd Hobsch scored two second-half goals to lead Werder Bremen to its third Bundesliga crown with a 3-0 victory over VfB Stuttgart Saturday.

The victory gave Bremen an 19-10-5 record and 48 points, one more than Bayern Munich, which drew 3-3 at Schalke and saw its hopes for a 13th German title evaporate.

Both Bremen and Bayern entered the day with identical records but Bremen ahead by a mere goal difference of one.

The title, Bremen's first since 1988, avenged its 1986 disappointment when a last-day loss to Stuttgart cost it the crown and gave it to Bayern.

At Stuttgart, Hobsch broke the scoreless tie with a 46th-minute goal and Thomas Wolter added the first insurance goal four minutes later, Hobsch completed the victory with a 74th-minute tally.

Bruguera captures French Open title

PARIS (AP) — Playing fearlessly in his first Grand Slam final, Sergi Bruguera ended Jim Courier's two-year reign as French Open champion Sunday in a thrilling, five-set battle of baseline slugfests.

Bruguera was a heavy underdog, bringing in a lifetime 0-4 record against a man who had won 20 straight French Open matches. But the 11th-seeded Spaniard beat Courier at his own power game, making fewer errors and exchanging winner for winner in a 6-4, 2-6, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 victory that took four hours.

Courier, the overwhelming pre-tournament favorite despite his No. 2 seeding, staged impressive comebacks in the second and fourth sets, and appeared en route to victory when he broke Bruguera's serve to open the fifth set.

But Bruguera electrified the crowd by breaking back in the fourth game, scoring on a lob and a drop shot to even the set at 2-2.

He broke again in the sixth game when Courier slammed a forehand ground stroke into the net.

Courier had two break points as Bruguera served for the match at 5-3, but Bruguera saved them. Courier saved one match point, but on the second one, he hit a groundstroke too long, and Bruguera collapsed on his back in ecstasy, fists clenched in the air.

On Saturday, Steffi Graf was hungry enough to become French Open champion again.

After a shaky start, the top-seeded German came from behind in the final set to defeat No. 5 Mary Joe Fernandez 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 Saturday for her third French Open title.

Yet, Graf seemed more subdued than ecstatic.

When Fernandez hit a forehand into the net to end the match after two hours, 30 minutes, Graf showed little jubilation. She held up her arms briefly, turned to her coach and parents in the stands, then exchanged kisses with Fernandez at the net.

The mood was clearly tempered by the absence of Monica Seles, who won the French Open the past three years but was unable to defend her title this year.



Spain's Sergi Bruguera — the new French Open champion

time because she was stabbed by a deranged fan of Graf during a tournament in Hamburg April 30.

After accepting the Suzanne Lenglen Cup from former champion Chris Evert, Graf said she regretted not saying a few words to Seles in her victory speech.

"I thought about it yesterday," she said. "But after the match, I was so out of it, I didn't do it. I did want to say it and I know I missed (the chance) and I should have said it."

Asked what her message to Seles would have been, Graf said, "we all hope she is going to be back soon and we think about her."

Graf was asked whether her victory would have meant more to her had Seles been in the tournament.

"Obviously you want to have everybody in the field," she said. "But I won it the way I did, and there is nothing else I can do about it."

Graf said she felt more relieved than anything else.

"I had a few close matches in the last few years and I was always the one who had to play against the better player at the end, so I was thankful it was the

other way around today," she said. A quick look at Jim Courier and Sergi Bruguera, the two men's finalists at the French Open:

Jim Courier
Born: August 17, 1970.
Birthplace: Sanford, Florida.
Residence: Dade City, Florida.
Height: 6-foot-1 (1.85 metres).
Weight: 175 pounds (79 kilos).
Plays: Right-handed.
Turned Pro: 1988.

Tournaments won: 13.
Career earnings: \$5,891,168.
1993 record: 39-5.

Top Grand Slam performances:
French Open: Champion 1991, 1992.
U.S. Open: Finalist 1991. Semi-finalist 1992.
Wimbledon: Quarterfinalist 1991.

Sergi Bruguera

Born: January 16, 1971.
Birthplace: Barcelona, Spain.
Residence: Barcelona, Spain.
Height: 6-foot-2 (1.88 metres).
Weight: 167 pounds (76 kilos).
Plays: Right-handed, (1% lefty).
Turned Pro: 1988.

Tournaments won: 3.
Career earnings: \$2,343,172.
1993 record: 39-6.

Top Grand Slam performances:
French Open: Fourth round 1991, 1992.
U.S. Open: Second round 1991, 1992.
Wimbledon: Second round 1991.
Australian Open: Fourth round 1993.

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Both vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ 7 3
♦ A K 7 5 4 2
♥ 9 4 3 2
WEST
♠ K 10 8
♦ Q 9 8 4
♥ 10 9 8
♣ 7 6 5
EAST
♠ 9 6
♦ 10 6 3 2
♥ 7 6 3
♣ Q 10
SOUTH
♠ A Q 5 4 2
♦ A 7 5
♥ Q 6
♣ A K 6
The bidding:
South West North East
1♠ Pass 2♦ Pass
3NT Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: Queen of ♣
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Adel Imam — in
The Forgotten
Arabic
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PHILADELPHIA
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Arafat wants U.N. to play greater role

IS (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat met with Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and urged the U.N. to play a bigger role in the East peace talks.

Arafat did not specify what role the U.N. might play in the month-old peace process. But he said he was sure more could be done to end a stalemate he blamed in Israel.

"Until now, the U.N. has been playing a role, but we want this role to be more active in the future," he told reporters after an hour of discussions with Dr. Ghali at the PLO's headquarters in a Tunis suburb.

Dr. Ghali, who was standing beside Mr. Arafat, said he had appointed a special personal representative to multilateral regional Middle East talks.

The U.N. chief said his representative will be Indian diplomat Chinmayi Garekhan, a U.N. undersecretary who will "act on behalf of the U.N. and make good will efforts to see this issue resolved in accordance with U.N. resolutions, especially Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338."

Both Mr. Arafat and Dr. Ghali described their talks as "very positive and constructive."

Dr. Ghali arrived in Tunis Friday on the third leg of a North

African tour that took him to Morocco and Algeria.

He said he had fruitful talks with Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and his foreign minister, Habib Ben Hhiya, on the Western Sahara problem, the Libyan conflict with the West and other issues.

He said he would discuss further the Libyan confrontation with the United States over the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 with Libyan officials during an African summit in Cairo later this month.

But Dr. Ghali declined to say if the United Nations is playing any other role in ending the conflict, which led the Security Council to impose aviation, diplomatic and arms sanctions on Tripoli.

Earlier, Dr. Ghali visited the Pakistani embassy in Tunis where he expressed condolences to the ambassador on the slaying of 28 Pakistani soldiers working with U.N. forces in Somalia.

He said he would urge the Security Council to adopt measures that will ensure the protection of all U.N. troops and other personnel in Somalia and punish those who were responsible.

The U.N. chief said the incident would not deter the United Nations from continuing its humanitarian effort in Somalia "to promote peace and reconstruction."



SPANIARDS VOTE: Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez (second from left) and his wife Carmen Romero (left), surrounded by photographers and cameramen, go to the polls Sunday in Spain's general elections (see story on page 8).

'Gaza first' is Israeli focus in tenth round

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel on Sunday accepted an official invitation to the resumption of the 10th round of U.S. — and Russian-sponsored Middle East peace talks in Washington set for June 15, the prime minister's spokesman said.

With little progress reported in the talks so far, speculation on the content of the next round swirled around the idea of granting autonomy to the Gaza Strip first as one possible avenue for a breakthrough.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin hinted last month that the Gaza Strip could be the test case of an agreement on an interim period of self-government. Palestinians labelled the idea premature.

"We believe that the Americans want to hear more about it and we also believe that the Palestinians, despite their statements, will also want to hear more on it," said Gad Ben-Ari, Mr. Rabin's spokesman.

Formal invitations for the June 15 talks were also sent to the Arab participants in the peace talks — Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians. They were expected to announce their intentions to return to the talks following a meeting of their foreign ministers Sunday in Amman.

"The statements were not very encouraging, but we know in the Middle East reality sometimes things do not go into straight lines," said Mr. Ben-Ari.

"Sometimes an idea moves ahead two steps and then backwards one step," he said.

The Palestinians have previously said they would only accept autonomy for Gaza if the Israelis decided to withdraw on their own, without linking it to any agreement for the rest of the occupied territories.

"The settlement has to be a comprehensive one. The whole territory — Gaza, West Bank and Jerusalem — has to be treated as a unit. We cannot deal with fragmentation," said Hanan Ashrawi, spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, when Mr. Rabin raised the idea last month.

Mr. Rabin mentioned the idea at a cabinet meeting.

"However, when an agreement is reached in principle on an interim settlement, there is nothing preventing its being applied first in Gaza," press reports at the time quoted Mr. Rabin's statement as saying.

Dr. Ashrawi said that discussing application of any agreement before the actual agreement had been reached was premature. The Palestinians are eager to get United States and Israeli agreement on a commitment of principles that will serve as a guide to the negotiations.

The ninth round, which recessed in Washington May 13, failed to achieve progress between Israel and the Palestinians on limited self-rule for the Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Nor did it produce agreement between Israel and the other Arab parties — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — on issues involved in the decades-old conflict.

'Saudis wanted to lease Gaza'

Israeli ministers met with the most senior government officials in Saudi Arabia about the Saudis leasing the Gaza Strip and turning it into the Hong Kong of the Middle East, Israeli entrepreneur Ya'acov Nimrodi said on Sunday.

According to Mr. Nimrodi, interviewed on The Present Situation by phone from Cannes, the meetings took place before the outbreak of the Gulf war at the initiative and under the mediation of Saudi billionaire Adnan Khashoggi. The Saudis, he said, were prepared to lease Gaza and invest billions of dollars to make the district into a Middle Eastern Hong Kong, provide an immediate solution to the refugee problem, end "terrorism," and offer a political solution for the district.

"A senior minister in the Shamir government and other ministers discussed the matter with the most senior Saudi officials," Mr. Nimrodi said. "However, because of the Gulf war and the Saudis' preoccupation with strengthening their army and country, the matter was forgotten."

Mr. Nimrodi said that after the Saudis dropped the idea, Mr. Khashoggi raised it with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, who expressed a desire to invest \$5 billion in Gaza.

"Qadhafi was enthusiastic about the idea, because of the distress imposed by the boycott," said Mr. Nimrodi. "He believes Israel can help free him from it."

According to Mr. Nimrodi, Colonel Qadhafi believes investing in Gaza will allow him to return to the bosom of the West in the role of a moderate Arab leader.

Husseini to meet Arafat before going to Washington

DUBAI (R) — Chief Palestinian peace negotiator Faisal Al Hussein will consult Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat before discussing U.S. principles for self-rule, PLO officials said Saturday.

Mr. Hussein, who is currently on a fence-mending visit to the United Arab Emirates, is expected to meet Mr. Arafat in Tunis next week before heading for Washington, the officials said.

Arab diplomats said there was also a proposal for U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to meet Israeli and Arab negotiators ahead of the 10th round of peace talks, due to start on June 15, to try and narrow differences.

Diplomats said Mr. Hussein sent Washington this week a five-page document containing questions on an American draft proposal for interim self-rule for the nearly two million Palestinians living under Israeli rule in the occupied territories.

The Palestinian questions deal with the final status of the occupied territories and the escalation of violence there, the future of Jerusalem and other issues, diplomats said.

On the last day of the ninth round of bilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington, the

United States proposed a compromise self-rule draft which was seen by Palestinians as an "American-Israeli" paper.

"We have now formed an opinion about the American paper and Faisal (Al Hussein) will go to Washington to discuss it and alternatives," PLO official Said Kamal told Reuters.

Mr. Kamal, Mr. Hussein and PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud Abbas arrived in the UAE Saturday to try and mend ties soured by the PLO's pro-Israeli stand during the 1991 Gulf crisis. It is the first such visit since the Gulf war.

They have so far met UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamdan Ben Zayed Al Nahayan, and Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Zayed Al Nahayan.

Members of the Palestinian team told Reuters the talks were very constructive and stayed clear of the PLO's stand during the Gulf war.

"They did not try to embarrass us or say who was wrong and who was right. Sheikh Khalifa briefly mentioned the Gulf crisis and moved on to bilateral ties, asked about the peace talks, the situation in the occupied lands, the issue of Jerusalem..." a PLO official said.

Cash crisis forces PLO cutbacks in Jordan

By John Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — The cash-strapped Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has suspended a health insurance scheme for its employees and their families in Jordan in its latest belt-tightening measure, PLO sources said Sunday.

The move affects the 3,000 Amman-based employees of the PLO, which faces a financial crunch resulting from a cutoff in Arab financial assistance following the 1990 Gulf crisis.

Employees at the PLO mission and related institutions in Jordan have not been paid their salaries for the past three months, a sum of \$400,000 monthly, one source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

That account was confirmed by two other PLO officials.

The officials said they were hoping PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who is expected to visit Jordan this week, would be able to solve the crisis.

The officials acknowledged that the financial problems were a result of the suspension of millions of dollars in aid from oil-rich Gulf states in retaliation for the PLO's tilt towards Iraq during the Gulf crisis triggered by Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait nearly three years ago.

Gulf states, holding back from the millions of dollars in "liberation tax" collected from Palestinian expatriates for Arab "fronts of the Israeli-occupied territories."

The PLO has implemented a series of austerity measures, including the suspension of monthly payments of about \$7 million to the families of Palestinian detainees and "martyrs" in the 5½-year-old uprising in the occupied territories, the source said.

According to the source, other cost-cutting actions include tightening the travel budget for PLO officials, moving to lower-rent residences and trimming allowances for employees of the Tunis-based organisation.

Libyan money stops PLO criticism, page 2

Somalia

(Continued from page 1)

They said Pakistan wants its soldiers to be given armoured personnel carriers, tanks and helicopters to prevent similar incidents.

"We can't be on trucks and on jeeps and be sitting ducks," said Shaharyar Khan, the number two official at Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

The Security Council scheduled an emergency session Sunday to deal with the crisis. Saturday's fighting broke out when U.N. troops inspected weapons warehouses, Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman Munir Akram said the commander of Pakistan's troops in Somalia had told him.

The warehouses are legal under U.N. policy and are subject to U.N. inspection. Gen. Aideded was told of the planned inspections 24 hours in advance and did not object, but the United Nations said the timing of the ambushes indicated Gen. Aideded planned the attacks.

"I think this was a pre-conceived and planned event," said U.N. special envoy Admirel Jonathan Howe. "Gen. Aideded's people were notified in advance of the sites to be inspected... they clearly had early warning of it and apparently decided they would have a reaction."

Gen. Aideded blamed the bloodshed on U.N. soldiers, including Americans, who he said "carried out provocative attacks" across the city.

Brotherhood appears divided over elections

AMMAN (I.T.) — The Muslim Brotherhood leadership Sunday appeared divided on whether to take part in the next parliamentary election.

On Saturday one of the movement's most prominent leaders, Abdul Rahim Ekour, told the Reuters news agency that the movement would boycott the elections if the Election Law was changed. On Sunday, however, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, quoted the spokesman of the Brotherhood, Ibrahim Khreizat, as saying the movement would take part in the next election no matter what changes were introduced to the law.

Reuter quoted Mr. Ekour as saying: "We will boycott the next elections and we will call on the Jordanian people to boycott the elections if the present election is changed without approval of the Parliament."

Mr. Khreizat said: "We have decided to take part in the election under any circumstances and whatever law governs the next polls."

According to Mr. Ekour, "the Islamic movement informed King Hussein recently that it opposed changing the present Election Law, but if it is to be changed, an extraordinary session of Parliament must be called to approve any changes or amendments."

Mr. Khreizat denied the movement had taken any such decision. "There is no decision against our participation in the next elections," he said.

"We are running our affairs on the basis of participation in the elections. If any change to our position takes place it will be announced in due time."

The Brotherhood is the largest single bloc in Parliament. Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, appointed a week to head a caretaker government before the ballot, said this week that Jordan may change its election laws to introduce the principle of one vote per person.

Egypt says Africans and Arabs angry with Sudan

By Jane Arraf
Reuters

AMMAN — Sudan has angered the Arab World and Africa in policies leading to friction far beyond a border dispute, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said Sunday.

The dispute is not over Halaib. It is much wider than that," Mr. Musa said in a Reuters interview when asked about prospects of reconciliation over the disputed triangle of land on the border between Egypt and Sudan.

"The Arab World is angry and the African world is angry with Sudan," he said. He did not elaborate but Cairo has accused Sudan's Muslim fundamentalist military government of training guerrillas to export Islamic revolution to Egypt, a charge Khartoum denies.

Tension between the two countries flared last year into a dispute over the potentially oil-rich Halaib triangle, where Sudan decided to mobilise forces after accusing Egypt of sending military reinforcements.

Mr. Musa indicated, however, he did not believe the dispute would escalate into fighting and said Egypt and Sudan, Africa's biggest country, were trying to resolve the dispute.

"Iraq is part and parcel of this region," Mr. Musa said. He said, however, that continued anger among Gulf states over Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait prevented concrete progress to improve relations.

The difficulty does not lie with the Iraqi people on Iraq... there is a lot of bitterness," he said.

8 of 21 ministers attend Hekmatyar cabinet session

KABUL (R) — Afghan Prime Minister-designate Gulbuddin Hekmatyar held his first meeting of his cabinet in his fortified base south of Kabul Sunday, although most ministers stayed away, a spokesman said.

Mr. Hekmatyar had originally scheduled the meeting for Saturday but postponed it after only two ministers turned up at the headquarters of his radical Hezb-e-Islami party in Charasyab, 20 kilometres from the war-devastated capital.

Hezb spokesman Qarib Ur Rehman Sayeed said eight ministers, including Mr. Hekmatyar, took part in Sunday's meeting. Some ministers are abroad and others have not yet returned from their hometowns after celebrating the Eid Al Adha festival last week, Mr. Sayeed said.

Political sources said most ministers were absent because of a lack of security or objections to holding the meeting outside the capital at Charasyab, from where Mr. Hekmatyar's forces have pounded the city with artillery fire for months.

Cabinet discussions focused on where to hold the next cabinet meeting," Mr. Sayeed said. President Burhanuddin Rabbani sent a delegation to Charasyab Sunday to ask Mr. Hekmatyar to hold the meeting in Kabul, presidential spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad said.

Mr. Morad said the prime minister and his cabinet, announced by the coalition government on May 20 to end bitter internal differences, should first take the oath of office in Kabul before holding a meeting.

Mr. Hekmatyar said the cabinet should meet first to decide where he should be based.

Iraq-appointed Kuwait premier, 5 Iraqis sentenced to death

KUWAIT (Agencies) — A state security court passed death sentences on an Iraqi-appointed prime minister in occupied Kuwait and five Iraqis convicted of aiding the invaders.

Court officials said Sunday Kuwaiti Colonel Alaa Hussein Khafaji, who was named prime minister, commander in chief and acting minister of defence and interior, was sentenced on Saturday in his absence. He is believed to be living in Iraq.

The court dropped charges against nine other members of the Iraqi-appointed government, the officials said.

The official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) said the state security court Sunday found the five Iraqi men guilty of attempting to recruit Kuwaitis to join Iraq's ruling Baath Party following Iraq's August 1990 invasion of the emirate.

They were also found guilty of trying to weaken Kuwaiti resistance to the occupation, which a U.S.-led multinational force

COLUMN

Japan police out in force to rehearse wedding security

TOKYO (R) — Thousands of police took to Tokyo streets Sunday to rehearse tight security measures ordered to avert extremist violence during Wednesday's wedding of Japan's crown prince to Masako Owada. After the formal ceremony at the imperial palace shrine, Prince Naruhito, 33, and ex-diplomat Owada, 29, are scheduled to travel four kilometres through city streets by open car to their new home at the Akasaka Palace. Last weekend radical leftist groups opposed to Japan's imperial system threatened an armed attack on the procession. At Sunday's dress rehearsal, a motorcade of black cars flanked by white motorcycles slowly cruised the route to be taken by the royal couple. Despite a light drizzle, policemen lined the roadside every four metres. Police divers searched for possible explosives in the muddy waters of the imperial palace moat, which runs along much of the procession's route. About 30,000 police officers, many based in from other parts of Japan, will be in the streets on the big day to guard against incidents.

Mother Teresa visits shrine

KNOCK, Ireland (AP) — Mother Teresa of Calcutta visited Ireland's most important Catholic shrine Saturday, and prayed for an end to abortion, divorce and contraception. An estimated 50,000 people gathered at the tiny town of Knock, 55 kilometres of Galway to see the 82-year-old nun, including Prime Minister Albert Reynolds, who had a private meeting with her before mass. Mother Teresa, winner of the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize for her work with the poor, received loud applause when she prayed during the service for the abolition of divorce, adding, "let there be no abortion or contraception." The issues are particularly explosive in Ireland, where more than 90 per cent of the people are Roman Catholic. This year, Ireland's government is expected to bring the country's laws in line with a Supreme Court decision that allowed a girl to go abroad for an abortion when her life was endangered. The government also plans to hold a referendum on divorce next year. Both abortion and divorce currently are outlawed. Lawmakers voted Thursday to make condoms available in vending machines across Ireland in a bid to combat the spread of AIDS. Mr. Reynolds refused comment on Mother Teresa's remarks.

Diplomat caught smuggling gold

COLOMBO (R) — An Egyptian diplomat was caught trying to smuggle 153 gold bars, valued at 10.5 million rupees (\$219,000), into Sri Lanka, customs and Foreign Ministry officials said Sunday. They said the gold was found in the false bottom of a bag at Colombo International Airport Saturday and was confiscated.

The diplomat was allowed to leave the airport. The Egyptian embassy was not immediately available for comment. A Foreign Ministry official said Egypt would probably be asked to recall the diplomat if an investigation found the man guilty.

Over 1,000 bicyclists protest in Paris

PARIS (AP) — More than 1,000 bicyclists paraded their cycles through Paris, protesting angry streets for cyclists and lack of bike paths in the French capital. The protesters paraded from the Place De La Bastille to the Place De La Concorde, both on Paris' right bank, occasionally snarling traffic in the protest, organised by the cycling group Movement for the Defence of the Bicycle.

"We're not asking that cities be covered with cycling paths, but that bicycles are taken into account with future urban planning projects," said Pierre Millotte of the movement. He deplored Paris' "disastrous policy" toward cycling, including tunnels and thoroughfares for traffic that leave no room for bicyclists, and the lack of parking spots with guardians at suburban train stations. "We want bicycles to be recognised as full-time transportation," Mr. Millotte said.

Some 100,000 Parisians use bicycles regularly and another 140,000 own bikes but never use them, according to a 1991 study by Paris City Hall. The newspaper Le Parisien published a map of Paris Saturday showing only four streets in the city that have been designated as cycling streets, with much of the capital labelled as dangerous for cyclists.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iranian opposition activist killed in Pakistan

NICOSIA (R) — An activist in the Iranian opposition movement, the Mujahdeen-e-Khalq, was assassinated in the Pakistani city of Karachi Sunday, a spokesman for the movement said. Mohammad Hassan Arab, also known as Mohammad Khan Baluch, was shot in the back and killed at 11.30 a.m. while walking in the street near his home in the city, spokesman Ali Safavi told Reuters in Nicosia by telephone. A bystander was also shot and killed, he added. Mr. Safavi blamed agents of the Iranian government and said it was not the first time members of the Mujahdeen had been attacked in Pakistan. In July 1987 three members were killed and many injured when gunmen attacked Mujahdeen houses in Karachi and the city of Quetta. There were other attacks in 1982 and 1985. The Mujahdeen, probably the most active Iranian opposition group in exile, recently stepped up its attacks on Iranian government targets inside the country.

Inonu to stand down as party boss

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's acting Prime Minister Ertugrul Inonu said Sunday he would step down as leader of the Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP), the junior partner in the ruling coalition. Mr. Inonu, quoted by the semi-official Anatolian news agency, said he would not run for the leadership in the next party convention scheduled for Sept. 11-12. "I will not be a contender and I am saying this definitely," he told reporters. "Those who want to bid must start working for it." Political critics say Mr. Inonu's decision could be part of his ultimate plan to reunite Turkey's Social Democrats after his SHP was weakened by desertions to rival parties. Mr. Inonu became acting prime minister after former Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel of the senior coalition partner True Path Party (DYP) was elected president by parliament last month. Mr. Inonu said his decision would not affect his duties as prime minister. "I will continue as the party leader until the Congress," he said. "This has nothing to do with the government."

Republican wins Texas Senate battle

HOUSTON (R) — Texas voters Saturday elected their first woman U.S. senator, who successfully campaigned against President Bill Clinton's energy tax in this oil-rich state. Republican Kay Bailey Hutchison won the Senate run-off election against Democratic incumbent Senator Bob Krueger. "The people of Texas have spoken," Ms. Hutchison said in her acceptance speech to about 1,000 supporters. Ms. Hutchison, whose victory gives Republicans control of the state's two U.S. Senate seats for the first time since 1875, had promised if elected to vote against Mr. Clinton's deficit reduction package, in part due to the \$71 billion energy tax.

Swiss approve U.S. warplanes purchase

ZURICH (R) — The first official results in a referendum in neutral Switzerland Sunday showed voters were likely to approve their parliament's multi-billion dollar plan to buy 34 U.S. jets. Of the first 3½ cantonal (regional) votes reported, all voted to reject the referendum's proposal that there should be a ban on buying any jets until the year 2000. To succeed, the proposal must win a majority of the popular vote and of the 23 cantonal votes. Under the rules of the referendum, a moratorium on buying new jets would have needed support from both a majority of the country's cantons and of the popular vote. The referendum was seen as a crucial test of the future military stance of a country where less than four years ago more than a third of voters backed abolition of the army.

Rafsanjani rival wants small government

TEHRAN (R) — Ahmad Tavakkoli, challenging incumbent Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in Iran's presidential race, said Sunday his campaign for small government and free enterprise with an Islamic twist was winning him support. "People's reactions to my speeches have been positive and vast," he said. The economics editor for the past eight years of the right-wing daily Resalat outlined at a news conference the stands of his campaign based on free-market principles and traditional moral values. Mr. Tavakkoli has won notoriety for his tussles with Iranian state television and the high-spending mayor of Tehran. But he remains an outsider in a race widely expected to be won by Mr. Rafsanjani, who is seeking a second four-year term in the June 11 election. Mr. Tavakkoli told reporters they should not take for granted the verdict of the voters, noting there were no opinion polls in Iran that could signal the preferences of the 30 million electorate.

An Appeal to Local and International Charitable Societies

In view of the closure of the occupied territories, we have established an oxygen and gas factory in the Gaza Strip. Construction works in the factory have stopped because of lack of funds. Henceforth, we call on local and international charity organisations to offer an interest-free loan, provided that we will present all the needed guarantees and will pay back the loan within the agreed date.

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